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GAMEFAN

NEXT GENERATION VIDEO GAME MAGAZINE

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 11



GNN SPECIAL REPORT:
BEHIND THE SCENES AT KONAMI JAPAN!

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- SKULLMONKEYS
- DIDDY KONG RACING
- SONIC R
- MDK
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ISSN# 1092-7212

Greetings, GameFan readers, it's nearly the end of the year; issues are getting thicker and the industry's best is being laid out before us. 'Tis the season to be entertained! Hollywood rolls out the h-core cinema (can you say *Alien Resurrection* and *Starship Troopers*?) and the game industry throws down with all its might. Fire up those credit cards people and remember... there's no debtors prison! In the nearly six years we've been making GameFan I'm hard pressed to remember a fourth quarter as sparkling as the one we're currently relishing. Ordinarily around this time there a selected few, forecasted, no-brainer holiday hits, but this year you could utter the same about a dozen or more titles. In this issue alone you've got your *Tomb Raider 2*, *Crash 2*, *Nightmare Creatures*, *MDK*, *Jet Moto 2*, *Pandemonium 2*, *Alundra*, *F1*, *Skullmonkeys*, *DKR*, & *Sonic R*, any of which would bring a smile to your face. Add to those December's *Magic Knight Rayearth*, and previously released *Castlevania SotN*, *FF7*, *Croc*, *Abe's*, a slew of amazing sports sims and a number of stellar corridor games and you've got well over twenty must own games inside of a 3 month window!

"Fire up those credit cards people and remember... there's no debtors prison!"

Normally we'd track down the games we passed on over the holidays (credit cards got limits!) throughout the traditionally barren post-new year dry spell, but in '98 even these months will be saturated with high powered software. Games like *Resident Evil 2*, *Enter the Gecko*, *Wild 9*, *MegaMan Neo*, *Banjo Kazooie*, *Conker's Quest*, *Yoshi's Story*, *Tomba*, *MediEvil*, and *Gran Turismo* (to name, mm, about half), will warm you over all winter long. It will be interesting to review the numbers once the dust has settled around March. I just hope that through it all each and every top quality title gets the recognition it deserves. It's quite a feat making a truly memorable game and I'm quite sure that as they are being constructed the maker's vision is that of you enjoying what they so painstakingly assemble.

On another note, in case you're wondering why we haven't jumped on the "Dural" bandwagon yet, it's due to the fact that 1) it's at least a year away, and 2) currently we are enjoying some awesome gaming midway through the PS' reign and at the beginning of Nintendo's at least 5 year run with the N64. We're extremely excited about it but will try to refrain from any speculation until we can at least attach some hard facts and screen shots. I've spoken to developers actively working on the new (and yet un-named) Sega (well NEC) dev. system and reports are that it's extremely efficient, with fantastic environments and superb tools. The development problems that plagued the Saturn will not effect this console, which provides near Model 3 quality at home... or it will in just over a year. Games currently in development have 12 month deadlines, so factoring in the time needed for a hardware launch, don't look for the new kid until (at the earliest) next December. It's more likely we'll see it in '99. And don't be surprised if it's got an NEC label on it either... There's about a dozen underway all totaled. As soon as it's time to really get excited we'll bring you the scoop.

Well, that's about it for me. Enjoy the issue, and remember, GF is proud to be the last color-drenched video game magazine and we will continue to blind our readers proudly!

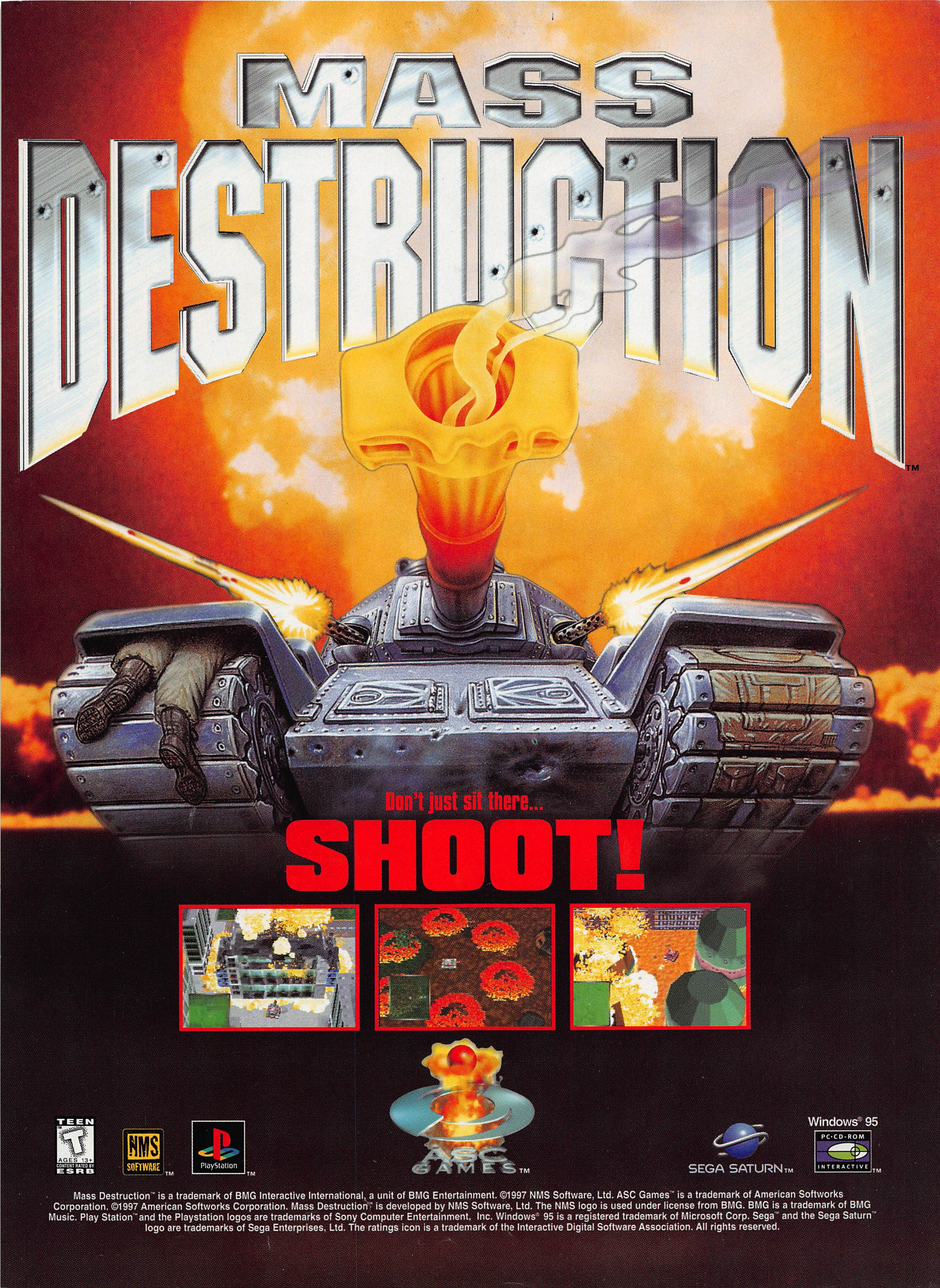
Until next month, see you!

A METROPOLIS PUBLICATION

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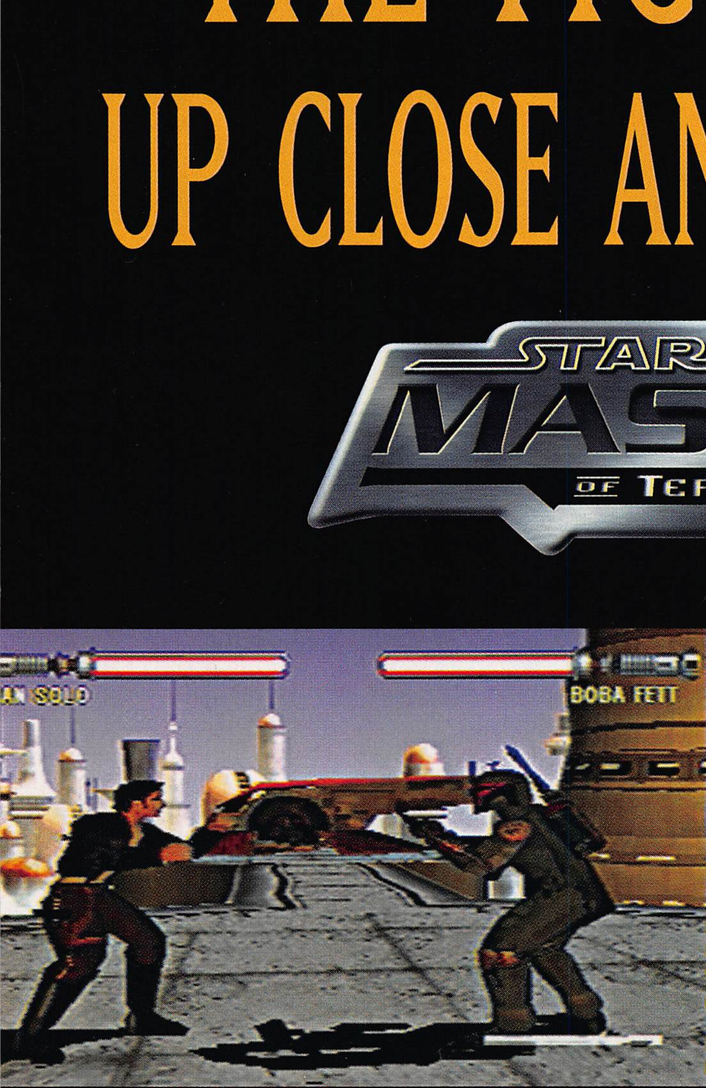
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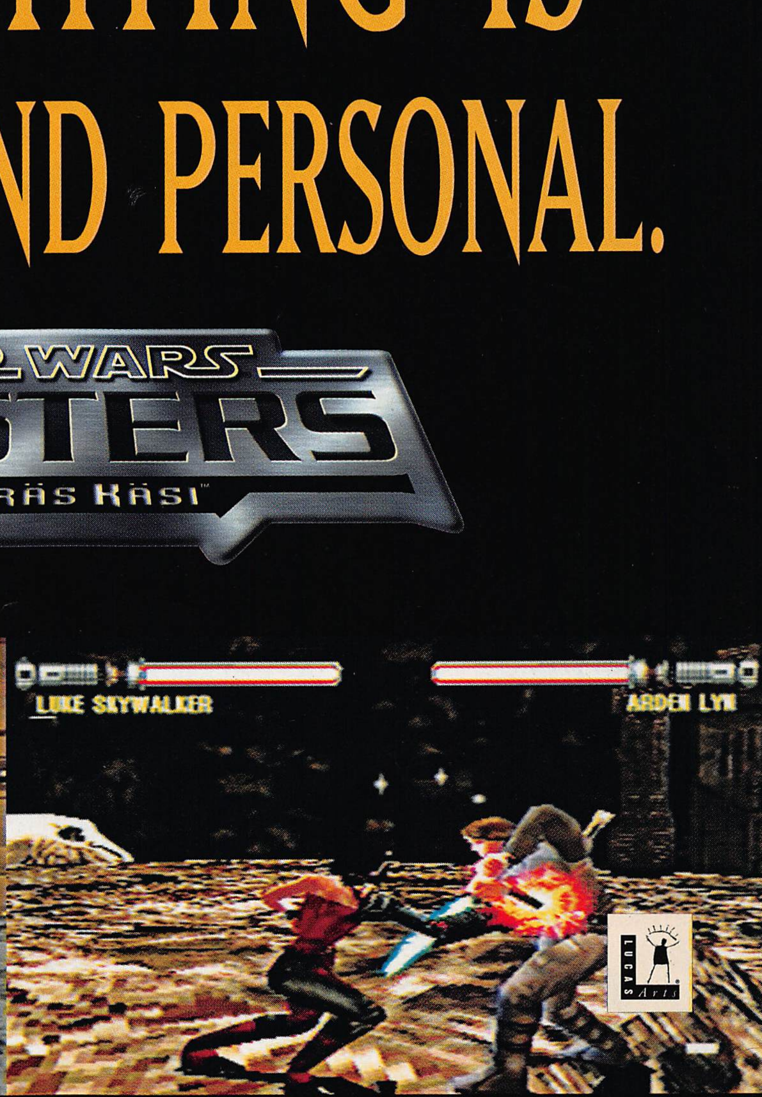


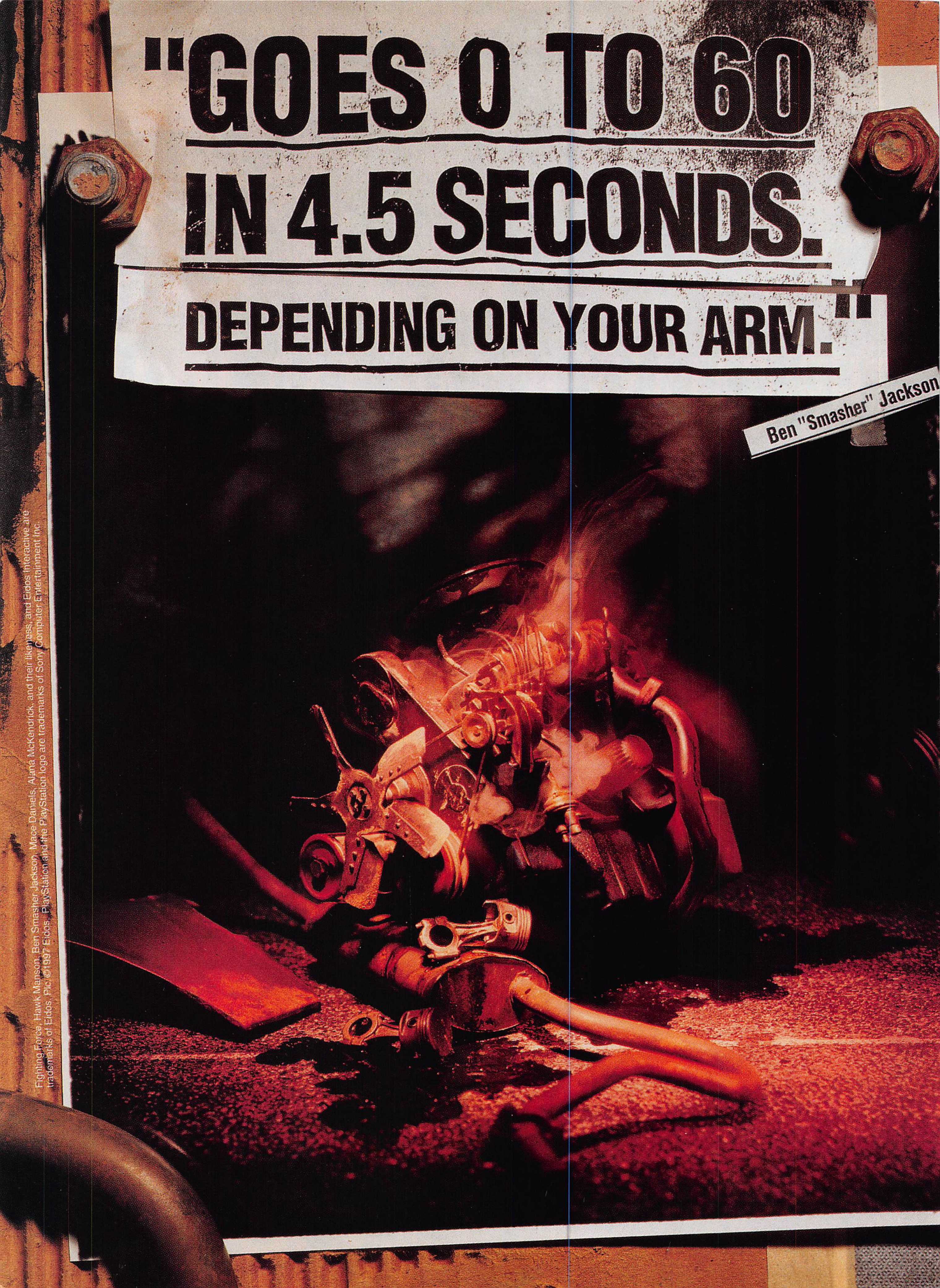


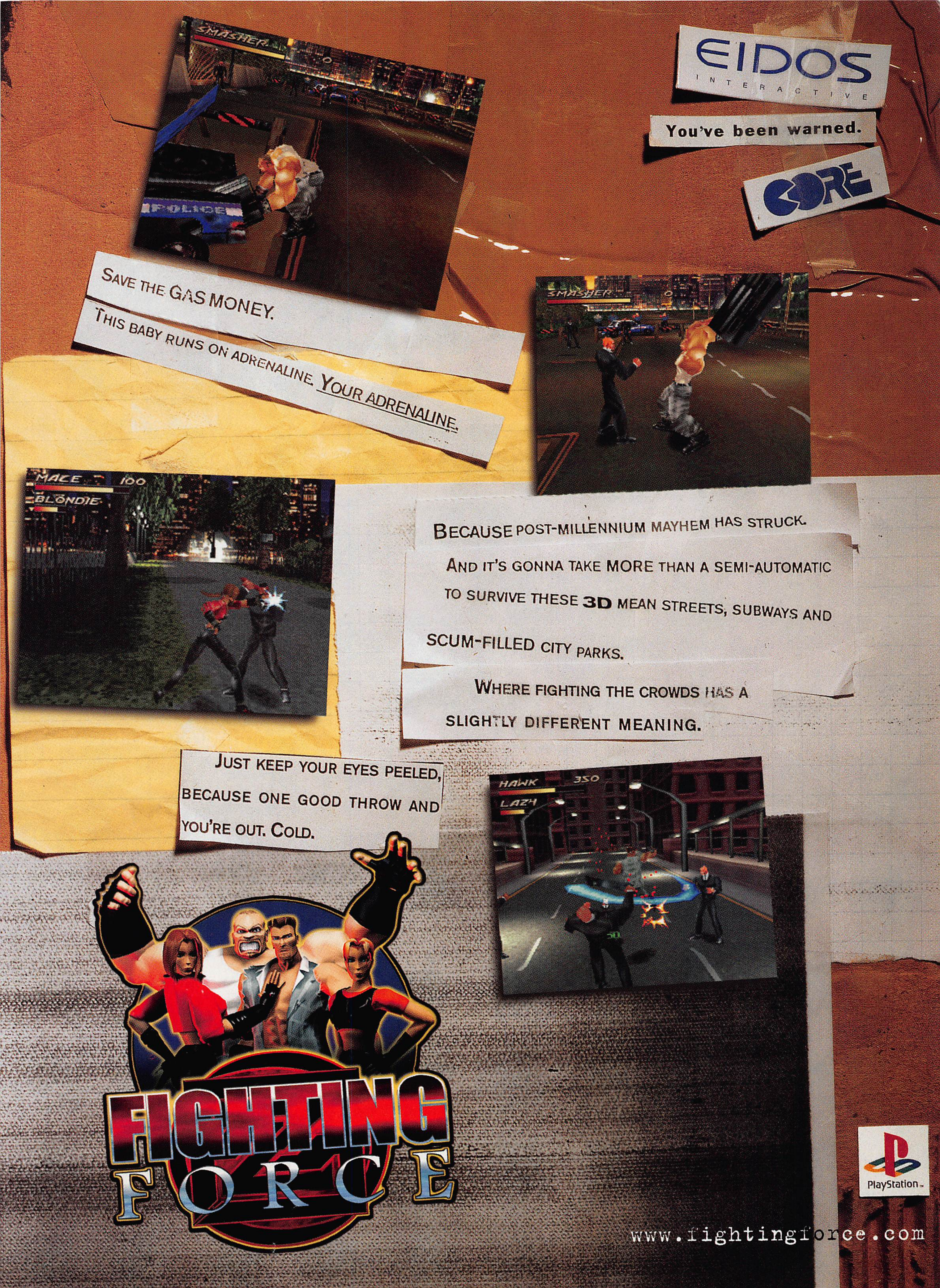
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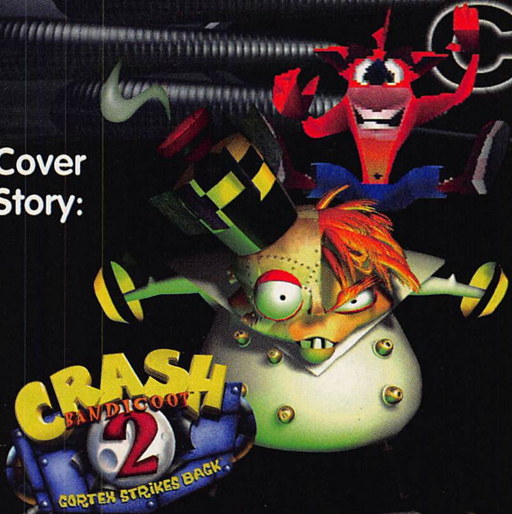



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Contents

Cover Story:



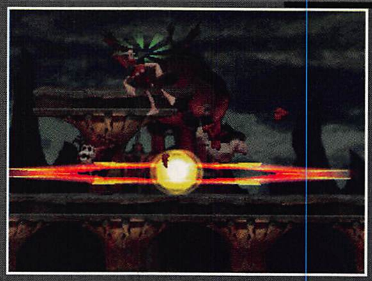


Do the Crash dance! 69

DKR pg. 118



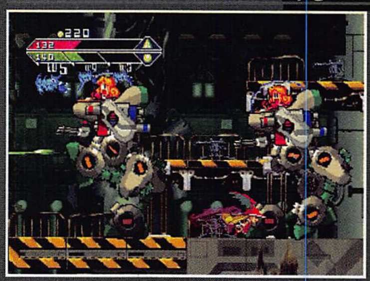
SKULLMONKEYS pg. 94



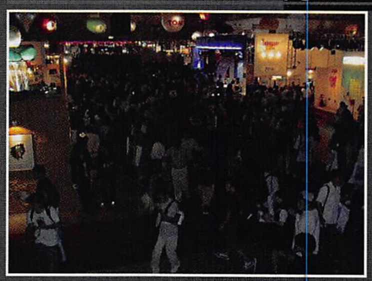
SONIC R pg. 126



SILHOUETTE MIRAGE pg. 159



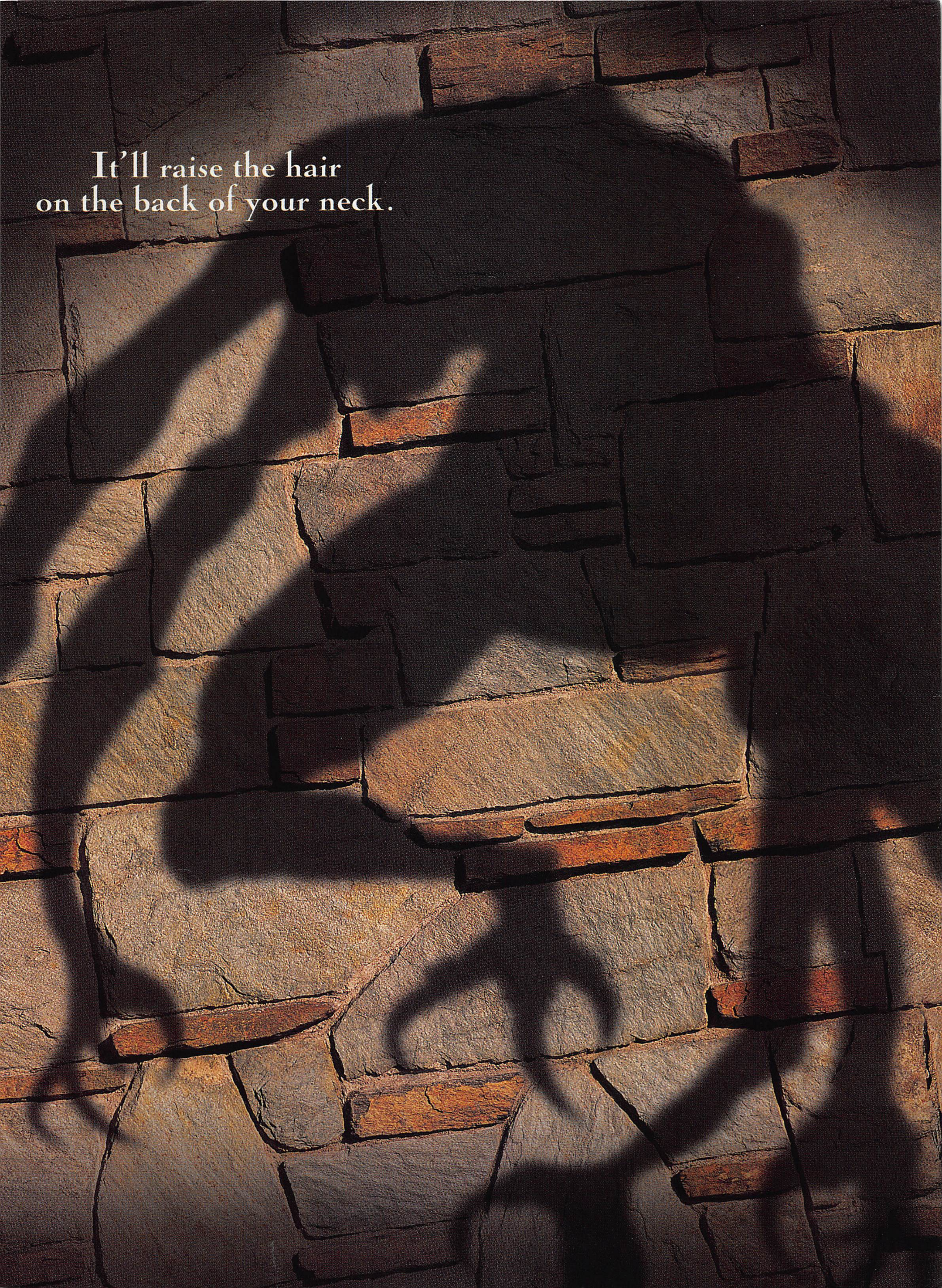
TOKYO GAME SHOW pg. 154





Nightmare Creatures 48

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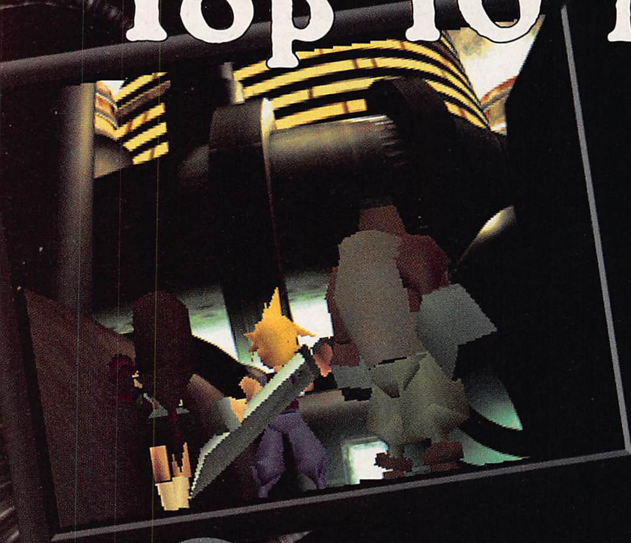
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Top 10 Most Wanted



FOR THE WEEK ENDING 9/30/97

READERS' TOP TEN

1. *Final Fantasy VII* - PS
2. *GoldenEye* - N64
3. *StarFox* - N64
4. *Tekken 3* - Arcade
5. *Mario Kart 64* - N64
6. *Shining the Holy Ark* - Saturn
7. *Wild Arms* - PS
8. *Tomb Raider* - PS
9. *Mario 64* - N64
10. *Resident Evil* - N64

1 *Final Fantasy VII* PS
READERS' TOP TEN

READERS' MOST WANTED

1. *Tomb Raider 2* - PS
2. *Zelda 64* - N64
3. *Resident Evil 2* - PS
4. *Castlevania SOTN* - PS
5. *Metal Gear Solid* - PS



6. *Grandia* - SS
7. *Jet Moto 2* - PS
8. *Street Fighter EX+α* - P
9. *Crash Bandicoot 2* - PS
10. *Sonic R* - SS

GAMEFAN EDITORS' TOP TEN



1. *Crash 2* - PS
2. *Tomb Raider 2* - PS
3. *Castlevania:SOTN* - PS
4. *MDK* - PS
5. *Mischief Makers* - N64
6. *Silhouette Mirage* - SS
7. *Final Fantasy VII* - PS
8. *Jet Moto 2* - PS
9. *Diddy Kong Racing* - N64
10. *Skull Monkeys* - PS



1. *Nightmare Creatures* - PS
2. *GoldenEye* - N64
3. *Tomb Raider 2* - PS
4. *Rapid Racer* - PS
5. *Duke Nukem 3D* - Saturn
6. *Beast* - PS
7. *MediEvil* - PS
8. *Judge Dredd* - PS
9. *DIddy Kong Racing* - N64
10. *Sentinel Returns* - PS



1. *Diddy Kong Racing* - N64
2. *Duke Nukem 3D* - Saturn
3. *Tomb Raider 2* - PS
4. *Crash 2* - PS
5. *Resident Evil* - Saturn & PC
6. *Silhouette Mirage* - Saturn
7. *Hexen 2* - PC
8. *SF Alpha 2* - Arcade
9. *Jedi Knight* - PC
10. *All NetLink Games* - Saturn



1. *Silhouette Mirage* - Saturn
2. *Klonoa of the Wind* - PS
3. *Pandemonium 2* - PS
4. *Grandia Demo* - Saturn
5. *BomberMan 64* - N64
6. *Mega Turrican* - Mega Drive
7. *Panzer Dragoon Saga* - Saturn
8. *Guardian Heroes* - Saturn
9. *Bare Knuckle 2* - Mega Drive
10. *BomberMan NetLink* - Saturn



1. *GoldenEye* - N64
2. *Duke Nukem 3D* - Saturn
3. *Sonic R* - Saturn
4. *Monster Rancher* - PS
5. *Nightmare Creatures* - PS
6. *Grand Tour Racing* - PS
7. *Rampage World Tour* - PS
8. *Ghost in the Shell* - PS
9. *Armored Core* - PS
10. *Final Fantasy Tactics* - PS



1. *Silhouette Mirage* - Saturn
2. *Crash 2* - PS
3. *Diddy Kong Racing* - N64
4. *Colony Wars* - PS
5. *Castlevania: SOTN* - PS
6. *Final Fantasy VII* - PS
7. *BomberMan 64* - N64
8. *Sega Rally NetLink* - Saturn
9. *Mischief Makers* - N64
10. *Tempest 2000* - Jaguar

DEVELOPER'S TOP TEN

This Month's Guest:
Kolbe Launchbaugh (Assistant Producer
Sony Interactive Studios America

1. *Rally Cross* - PS
2. *Final Fantasy VII* - PS
3. *CART World Series* - PS
4. *Twisted Metal Series* - PS
5. *Quake* - PC (multi-player only)
6. *Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee* - PS
7. *VF2* - Arcade
8. *Daytona USA* - Arcade (8-player)
9. *Virtua Racing* - Arcade
10. *Need For Speed* - 3DO




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VIEWPOINT

Legend
Graphics
Control
Play mechanics
Music
Originality



E. STORM REUBUS KNIGHTMARE ECM HAMBLETON GLITCH GUVNOR SUBSTANCE D SHIN ROX ORION



CRASH 2
GAME OF THE MONTH!



Colony Wars
PlayStation
Psygnosis
Shooting/Adventure

Absolutely beautiful, but painfully typical: that's the best way to describe Psygnosis' latest. Featuring some of the most amazing visuals you're likely to EVER see on the PS (if they get much better than this, my heart <ack>...) *CW* is a graphical masterpiece. Lightning-fast action, scorching lighting, and massive explosions along with a soundtrack from above—this game has the aesthetics nailed. But when it comes to gameplay it gets a bit derivative a little too quickly, with each mission becoming nothing more than a glorified shooter. Everyone needs to see this one, though, if only for the eye-rending graphics...<shudder>.

G 10 · C 8 · P 7 · M 9 · O 5 — **75**

Psygnosis' *Colony Wars* boasts what may be the most intensely beautiful space environment ever to grace a console. Visually stunning, this highly kinetic 3D shooter furthers Psygnosis' reputation for providing almost awe inspiring images, all wrapped in a big shiny bow. The feeling of playing the game, of flying your ship around the amazing sights and dogfighting against incredible backdrops of giant ships, luminous suns, and great black holes is incredible. Though as a caveat, there is repetition in the almost exclusively destructive nature of the missions. I am accepting that. This is simply a beautiful 3D shooter with an epic soundtrack, entertaining multi-path/multi-story mission structure, and gorgeous imagery.

G 9 · C 8 · P 8 · M 9 · O 8 — **89**

Boy, does this game ever look bad. Psyche! *Colony Wars* is one of the most impressive-looking space-based 3D shooters ever! From the warping stars that convey your speed to the vast enemy space stations, everything in *Colony Wars* is lovingly crafted with the utmost attention to detail. Psygnosis is a veritable eye-candy store. The action isn't bad either, with responsive controls and fast-paced 360-degree dogfighting. But like my comrades say: things can get a leetle bit repetitive.

G 9 · C 9 · P 8 · M 9 · O 7 — **88**



CoolBoarders 2
PlayStation
Sony
Simulation

Whoa, what an improvement! And I loved the first *CoolBoarders*! Where the first had 5 tracks, this has 16!! Two boarders in the first—four in CB2 (not including the 3 hidden characters I've found thus far). Tricks? Geez, I couldn't even begin to tell you the extent of the increase in number, and now they expect you to do them two at a time!!! Plus, the additions of a Big Air Mode, two-player madness, a Board Park, a championship mode, and better, more responsive control pushes this game right over the edge to become an instant favorite of mine.

G 8 · C 9 · P 9 · M 7 · O 9 — **90**

Madness, I tell you, it's madness... Two-player mode smokes in *CB2*! And in one mode, landing clean tricks earns your boarder a little speed boost. But, although the graphics have been cleaned up quite a bit in comparison to *CB1*, they still aren't all they could be, with occasional seams and polygonal glitching in the 'boarders. And what happened to the awesome soundtrack of last year? Ah, well, the new music's cool, I guess... All told, *CB2* is a blast to play, especially 2-player... I just wish I could fit a cap over this damn stuck cartridge. My ears are freezin'!

G 8 · C 9 · P 8 · M 7 · O 8 — **83**

Well, I wasn't the biggest fan of the first one, but this one is far better. Featuring awesome tricks, a fast 30 FPS engine, and much less breakup, this one is a good bet for all you snowboardin' freaks out there. Some decent tunes—probably the only down point over the first one—round out a pretty good package. Oh, and make sure to keep an eye out for 'Gray', he's (it's?) an interesting fellow. While I'm not quite as excited about this game as Reubus (he's not all there) I am duly impressed. UEP Systems and Sony probably have a sleeper hit in this one. Just watch out for those face plants, it ain't a pretty sight.

G 8 · C 8 · P 8 · M 6 · O 8 — **75**



Courier Crisis
PlayStation
GT Interactive
Action/Delivery

New Level is to be commended for such an ambitious game plan. Not only is raging throughout densely populated cities a kick in the pants but it's original as well. In the area of gameplay, they've definitely pulled it off. Well thought out controls, a steadily increasing challenge and an array of accurately portrayed aerial stunts make for great playability. The 1st-generation engine makes for a slow frame rate and less-than-impressive textures but still the good outweighs the bad, if you like the premise.

G 7 · C 8 · P 8 · M 5 · O 9 — **70**

I know that good graphics don't make a good game—but they sure help! *Courier Crisis*' engine is really below standard, especially when compared with the likes of *Felony 11-79* (a similar style game). The principle behind the game is sound but the control mechanics are needlessly frustrating, the physics are extremely unrealistic (in a stupid way) and there's little depth to back up the gameplay. *CC* may be for some, but it's not me.

G 6 · C 7 · P 6 · M 8 · O 8 — **67**

If you remember, I always liked *Courier Crisis* in my previews...hoping desperately the frame rate would be increased. Well, this engine just sloshes through the mud at 15 fps and it really shows. However, I tend to side with Storm on this one, 'cause *CC* is actually pretty fun. The missions are varied and cool, your biker gets lots of air and controls well enough, and the levels are stuffed full of loonies to muck up your life. At the very least, this graphic dinosaur plays well. A frequent rental, perhaps?

G 4 · C 7 · P 7 · M 5 · O 7 — **67**



Crash 2
PlayStation
Sony
Action/Platform

Still the greatest looking game on any console by a Cortex mile, *Crash* now delivers everything I, as a full blown platform hound, desire, along with the gradual difficulty, hidden long term pay-off, and mass appeal of a Miyamoto game. *Crash* has come a long way. And while part of me will always look back on the original as a turning point for the genre I can't help respect this version every bit as much. In a year, they've achieved greatness. These guys are among the elite of the industry. *Crash 2* is a masterpiece.

G 10 · C 10 · P 10 · M 9 · O 9 — **99**

Crash 2 is without a doubt the most beautiful 3D game to have ever graced the PS. The quality of the textures, the fluidity of the animation and the detail of the models is unprecedented on a console title. Gameplay wise things are much as they were in Crash. The brace of new game mechanics are a welcome addition, though they're hardly 'ground breaking'. Still, as the zenith of traditional platformers, it's hard to find fault with Crash 2. It's longer (finding all the hidden stuff is TOUGH!), prettier and just generally better than the original. Enjoy!

G 10 · C 9 · P 9 · M 8 · O 8 — **94**

Knightmare is an ill-informed Brit, and you know how that can be. Most beautiful 3D game to ever grace the PS? Try the most beautiful-looking game EVER for a home console. Maybe ever, period. Really. These 100% real-time visuals (not a scrap of FMV anywhere on the disc) simply should not exist! It's deep, deep mania, to be sure, but what gameplay could possibly ever match such amazing visuals? *Crash 2*'s tries very hard, introducing plenty of new game concepts (burrowing rocks mït skill), but the level of innovation doesn't reach the heights of say, a *Mario 64*. In the end, though, who cares? It does what it does perfectly, and that's enough for me. Buy this, now.

G 10 · C 9 · P 7 · M 8 · O 7 — **98**



F1 '97
PlayStation
Psygnosis
Racing

Question, could Psygnosis somehow top their masterpiece F1 simulation of a year ago? Answer: Oh heck, yeah! They've improved the design and playability in a multitude of ways from the AI to the graphics. This new addition is actually enough of a departure to warrant purchase if you crave a true sim. or simply better graphics all around. It's in hi-rez, so it looks real purty. Psygnosis has again captured the heart of F1 circuit racing down to the square inch and at the same allow us to peruse an inspired arcade racer as well.

G 9 · C 8 · P 8 · M 8 · O 7 — **89**

Aw, to heck with the arcade mode! Give me the simulation, any day! There's where the challenge lies! And Lordy Mama, does this have challenge... Bizarre Creations has handed Psygnosis another sure-fire world-wide hit, I'm sure, but I gotta tell you this: Improvements notwithstanding, *Formula 1: Championship Edition* somehow comes up just the barest bit short of the first, overall. I can't explain why... Just not quite as, uh, *fun*... But, still, they've got far and away the best of its kind on any system, and I'll be first in line on release day, that's for sure!

G 9 · C 9 · P 9 · M 7 · O 7 — **92**

As a very casual follower of F-1 racing, I was anticipating this update of the PS' best, most comprehensive F-1 series. It's better overall I think than last year's, though the graphics in F-1 CE, while technically having been improved (higher-res and frame rate, better looking cars), subjectively look kind of worse overall. At times, the pop-up is jaw-droppingly severe. But I understand and appreciate the difficulty of modeling real-life tracks, which obviously have no regard for current system limitations. The gameplay however is all good with improved physics, better crashes, better AI, and more commentary. Fans of the original...

G 7 · C 8 · P 8 · M 8 · O 7 — **85**



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MUSIC COMPOSED BY ELLIOT GOLDENTHAL VISUAL EFFECTS BY JOHN DYKSTRA A.C.E. EDITED BY DENNIS VIRKLER, A.C.E. PRODUCTION DESIGNER BARBARA LING DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY STEPHEN GOLDBLATT, A.S.C.
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS BENJAMIN MELNIKER AND MICHAEL E. USLAN BASED UPON BATMAN CHARACTERS CREATED BY BOB KANE AND PUBLISHED BY DC COMICS WRITTEN BY AKIVA GOLDSMAN PRODUCED BY PETER MACGREGOR-SCOTT
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GTR
PlayStation
Activision
Racing



The fact that Activision has gone from a third-class software developer to first class in record time can be directly attributed to software like this (and a very sharp acquisitions dept). A great racer, featuring four different types of driving and tons of tracks with zero pop-up is a good thing indeed. Secrets abound (look for the glowing orbs) and the frame rate is a rock-steady 30 FPS. The textures are very clean and it all feels very solid and expertly programmed—nice job Eutechnyx. This is easily one of the best racers on the PS (right up there with *Rage Racer*, in fact), and that's saying a lot, given the number that are currently available. You can't go wrong with this one folks—take it out for a few laps, it beats others hands down.

G 9 · C 8 · P 9 · M 7 · O 7 — **90**



Let the November racing extravaganza continue. *GTR '98* from Activision and European developers Eutechnyx covers a lot of ground with 36 unique courses (six main tracks with six variations) and 40 different cars (eight teams with five car types each). Tying all this together is a wonderfully prescient engine—there is almost no pop up, and what little there is respectfully distant. It's impressive, as is the quality of the track design and complexity of roadside detail. Good control with analog support and a very playable split screen mode (including a four player link-up) round out this fine racer.

G 8 · C 8 · P 8 · M 6 · O 7 — **84**



Wow, impressive engine! Seriously, this is probably the best pop-up control I've ever seen in a PS racer. And they're not hiding it with clever turns, either...you can see FAR ahead, and it's smooth. Too bad the tag along techno-rock soundtrack blows, hardcore. In terms of gameplay, *GTR* doesn't use my preferred drifting method (i.e., *Sega Rally*), what with that strange L and R button sharp turning, but it's still very playable. It's also good to see the vast selection of tracks and vehicles are high quality designs and models. *GTR* will never be the top PS racing game though... *Rage Racer* still rules.

G 9 · C 7 · P 8 · M 3 · O 7 — **84**



Jet Moto 2
PlayStation
Sony
Racing



While I feel their are now way too many racing games on the PS, I also feel that *Jet Moto 2* is the one you should buy if you must choose only one. This game assaults you as you try desperately to hang on through some of the most grueling courses known to man. Though hard, with practice it can and should be conquered by all. The music's back on track as are the visuals which surpass last year's installment by some measure. Hardcore racing is at hand!

G 9 · C 9 · P 8 · M 8 · O 8 — **92**



Being one of the four people (3 of us work here and the other hangs out in GF Chat) that preferred the first *Jet Moto* over *Wave Race* (although why they were ever compared is beyond me), I am very impressed with this new version. This game is fast, smooth, and lacks the breakup that plagued the first one. Fewer riders (10 instead of 20) make racing that much more personal (that Hun guy's a dead man) and some awesome track design—featuring a trashed LAX— round this hot title out. Oh, can't forget the crankin' tunes that get you in the mood to knock the snot out of any and all opponents. SingleTrac just rocks, and here's to hopin' they flourish under GTI (please do another combat racer)—good luck guys!

G 8 · C 8 · P 8 · M 9 · O 9 — **87**



Well, while the graphics are improved slightly, I miss the awesome surf tunes of the first, and the tiny bit of collision problem in the first is still there in its sequel. Sometimes it feels as though the track just grabs your bike and flings you to the ground. But, being the huge *Jet Moto* fan that I am (anyone else get the ninth and final code in the first, huh?), this is just nitpicking. *JM2* is still one kickin' game, and the art design is incredible. New characters and old favorites (sorry, Wild Ride, but the Hun's got you outclassed!), insane course design, and one hell of a good time playing it! Also, there's no better control setup in a racing game than *JM2* with the dual-analog!!!

G 9 · C 6 · P 3 · M 8 · O 6 — **89**



MDK
PlayStation
Playmates
Action/Adventure



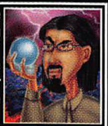
All this time I've been reading about *MDK* and friends have been telling me it's really a console game in a PC body... but I never played it until now. I'm a happy console man, so I waited... and waited. Having thoroughly perused this miracle translation all I can say is; *MDK* lives up to the hype! It's intelligent, funny, fun, and intense all at once. Shiny's design is truly inspired and Neversoft has done them proud. You'll play it a bunch of times and love every second of each adventure. Sequel please, and uh, console first this time, Dave!

G 9 · C 8 · P 10 · M 9 · O 10 — **90**



When Shiny first announced *MDK* Dave Perry himself said the game could not be done on a home console. Yet here I am, not six months later, playing a decent version of *MDK* on my PS. Ok, so the graphics aren't as good (there's some pixelization, warping and glitching) but generally speaking Neversoft has done a great job. PS *MDK* retains all the imagination, intelligence and fun of the PC original and adds some awesome red-book audio tracks and hidden arenas to boot. I don't think it works as well on console game as it did on PC, but it's still an enjoyable romp. Recommended.

G 8 · C 8 · P 9 · M 9 · O 10 — **85**



I heard with my own two little ears the words of David Perry: "If the PS version isn't up to snuff, I won't let it be released." He's usually not blowing hot-air when he says something like that. And now, after playing a reviewable PS version, I'd have to say that he pretty much kept his word. But just between you, me, and the wall, this game designed for PC is a little bit much for the $150 PS. To give credit, Neversoft has done a really good job within the limitations of the PS hardware, and the game is basically intact, just really rough around the edges. Shiny's brilliant original design saves the day in the end though, and PS *MDK* captures enough of the PC version to be enjoyable.

G 7 · C 8 · P 8 · M 9 · O 9 — **85**



MK Mythologies
PlayStation
Midway
Fighting/Adventure



Simply put, here's the problem... They didn't remake Sub Zero for the game he's starring in. The designers should have drawn, or even rendered an action platform (and therefore controllable) version of Sub Z that jumps with a button and controls with the precision one needs in such a game. The concept is certainly sound and they've got the visuals dialed, but I (not being an *MK* zombie) personally, could not overcome Sub Z's goofiness. Of course it will sell billions of copies and *MK* fans will wholly dig every minute of it.

G 8 · C 4 · P 7 · M 7 · O 8 — **65**



Well, the graphics are nice, I'll give it that, but this is just more *MK* in a platform mad quest. You're either gonna love this or hate it (if you're not an *MK* fan, you're in the latter group) and the wonky control will see to the death of many a control pad. The jumping is excruciatingly painful, and that turnaround button needs to go. This title had some things going for it (graphics and story mainly) but it just isn't any fun when you constantly fall to your death due to the busted play mechanics. Unless you're a certified *MK* junkie with a lot of patience, you're better off looking somewhere else for a solid platform adventure. This one doesn't cut it.

G 8 · C 4 · P 4 · M 7 · O 4 — **45**



You know what, I really don't see who this game is going to appeal to. *MK* fans probably aren't going to appreciate the platform sections, while platform fans definitely aren't going to appreciate the *MK* style fighting. I think the adventure structure is a nice touch and some of the 3D backgrounds look great, but generally speaking this is one of those concepts that just looks better on paper than it does on the screen. Having said that, there are bound to be thousands of *MK* fans who will purchase and love this game regardless, and who am I to argue in the face of popularity...

G 6 · C 7 · P 6 · M 7 · O 8 — **60**



Moto Racer
PlayStation
EA
Racing



Moto Racer does alot right, and just a couple of things wrong. Right are the graphics and smooth frame rate, wrong are the riders animations, especially the stick in the rear Motocrosser who rarely lifts his backside off the seat and has no style to speak of. This boy is just gettin' pulled around the track like a bag of beans. The road racer's cool, but the MX guy... dork central. Otherwise this is a well-produced, well-rounded racer with a fierce engine and respectable tunes. Wow.

G 8 · C 8 · P 7 · M 7 · O 7 — **78**



Wickedly fast motorcycle racing sound good to you? Me too. The speeds reached in this game are rivaled only by the likes of *Rage Racer*. The control is tight, but requires some practice to get down pat, especially on the street bike sequences. A great game that I didn't think Delphine (makers of *Flashback* and *OOTW*) would be capable of; I need not have worried. With better draw-in than the 3Dfx version and solid environments all lending to the sheer speed of this title. Decent dirt bike bits add some flavor and variety, and cool secrets (think small) round out this impressive package. Now, if they'd just give us a new 2D *OOTW* or *Flashback*...

G 8 · C 7 · P 7 · M 7 · O 6 — **82**



I guess ECM and I are opposites in more ways than just weight (Heh heh, I'm thin and he's uh... not.): I found the street bike sections a heck of a lot easier than the motocross tracks. The motocross parts seem like the fun between the serious in this game. While they're good, hittin' the road for some flat out speed just feels, well, meatier. It's really satisfying to gun the engine off the crest of a rise with your front wheel in the air, then letting off the throttle just enough to let the front end drop so you can steer again before that left turn... Good fun, but for me, it didn't last. Still worth more than a look, though.

G 8 · C 8 · P 8 · M 7 · O 7 — **85**



NFS V-Rally
PlayStation
EA
Racing



Rally me this, rally me that, or better yet rally me again when you get a clue on how these cars should control. Now here's a pretty game, folks, that just controls like a dud. I mean, must the slightest embankment send me tumbling like a feather in a wind tunnel? And where's the power slide folks? Sure, if you're like Reubus, who'll drain the life out of any thing that steers until he dials it in, well then, OK. Otherwise, this one's all show and no go.

G 8.5 · C 4 · P 6 · M 7 · O 6 — **70**



Well, this game came to our expectant hands with a tremendous amount of hype behind it (UK sales saw to that). Sad to say, though, it doesn't quite make it. Good control and a nice selection of tracks and cars, along with some good graphics can't save this game from the major physics problems. I do not enjoy watching my car tumble end-over-end simply because I tapped the side of the road, and this really ruined it for me. If only EA had taken some time to tweak the physics (add some gravity, please) and this game could have been almost everything it was made out to be. As it stands, only rally fiends are going to have the patience to deal with this one. Decidedly average.

G 8 · C 8 · P 4 · M 7 · O 6 — **65**



*"Well, I must say, this game looks really, really good. Look at me zip along, fast and smooth, no clipping, no pop-up, excellent frame rate, beautiful tracks, the cars look great, I'm racin' along like a bat out of h--hey, what's happening? Why's my car tumbling? Oh, wait, now I remember... I ran over a small bush on the trackside. Hmmm... I'll get a Pepsi and try this again." (*pffft! glug glug glug*) "Ahhhh, that's better... Now I'll just—uh, why's my car still tumbling?"* Seriously, though, it's not as bad as it sounds. I like this game quite a bit, and I only wish I'd've had time to play it more before this ish, cuz I'm sure going to get into this one. The physics are nowhere near as good as *Rally Cross*, but this is still a really solid racer.

G 7 · C 6 · P 6 · M 8 · O 5 — **82**



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Nightmare Creatures
PlayStation
Activision
Action/Horror



Activision's hack-a-thon is a bona fide contender. *Nightmare Creatures* capsulates classic horror, 3D fighting, and adventure gaming in a morbid romp that echoes proudly the dark themes it's based on. From front to back evil lurks, from the foreboding tunes to the ultra violent gameplay. Easily the most gruesome assembly of polygonal death ever assembled, *NC* is a stroll in old London Town you'll not soon forget. Adam Crowley *will* scare you... if you have the mettle to meet him.

G 9 C 8 P 9 M 9 O 8 **89**



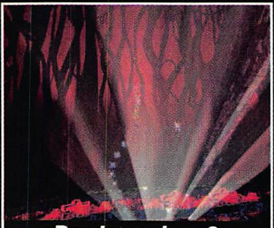
This game is scary! Some of the freaks you will face in the course of *Nightmare Creatures'* 18+ demented levels are abominations from the very pits of hell itself! The models are remarkably detailed and move with disturbing realism (if such things could exist) while the chilling soundtrack perfectly matches the atmospheric background environments. It's like *Resident Evil* meets *Tekken*! On the down side the draw-in is a little close (it has to be to have models like this) and the combat can get both repetitive and frustrating at times. Still, an original idea well executed. Bravo, Kalisto!

G 6 C 6 P 6 M 5 O 7 **83**



The quality and polish on this release shows what a team of dedicated and talented programmers can achieve. Pure atmosphere you can cut with a spoon. A variety of critters sewn together by a mad man with long greasy hair. But more importantly, we've got a graphics engine to die for, a really, REALLY long and difficult quest, a frantic journey made all the more tense because of your impending demise should you not cull a creature. Although not puzzle-orientated in the slightest (this is distinctly more action-based) with some slight control problems (especially when jumping), the quality and meticulous detail present here wins through in the end. Pure brooding atmosphere... acquire this by hook or by crook!

G 9 C 8 P 9 M 10 O 9 **95**



Pandemonium 2
PlayStation
Crystal Dynamics
Action/Platform



If *Pandemonium* gave you butterflies you'll probably barf them up when you encounter part 2. This testament to Crystal's polygonal mastery is a 2.5D platformer gone insane with enough mayhem and play mechanics for any two games. The new Nikki and Fargus destroy last year's models, the visuals astound, and longevity was obviously a priority. The CG again will astound you. A blazing sequel!

G 9 C 9 P 8 M 8 O 8 **90**



Why do I like this game so much?! How did it happen? I've been blind-sided, that's it. Here I am, itching for an old-school platformer, begging for hot 2D gameplay, and suddenly *Pandemonium 2* shows up to satiate my hunger?! Yes, far beyond my wildest expectations. In terms of gameplay variety, *P2* is the horn o' plenty. Many cool situations, tense moments of chaos, and dramatic camera changes—handled admirably well by a robust engine. And the characters move and respond in a way that tells me many people toiled and tested for our benefit. Besides, I enjoy those pretty, trippy 2.5D polys, even if I don't lick the toad.

G 9 C 9 P 9 M 8 O 9 **92**



I don't know what CD did, but *P2* has improved 100% since our last preview disc. Maybe I just wasn't looking at the big picture, but all of the various elements have come together nicely. I'm not sure if I like the new look for Nikki and Fargus, but I definitely like the game! The gameplay is 100% hardcore 2D platforming action, set to some cool tunes and brain-bendingly bizarre backgrounds. There's no way you're telling me that mind-altering substances didn't play a large role in this game's creation!! The graphics aren't exactly revolutionary but they get the job done. I like it!

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 6 **87**



Rampage
PlayStation
Midway
Arcade



A decade ago, *Rampage* thrilled me, although I must admit, even with all the new next-gen goodies, the thrill (for the most part) is gone. The gameplay just doesn't hold up in this, the age of true action and adventure. I definetely see the merit in releasing the classics (it's aways fun to go back) just maybe not so far. I'll give you this, *Rampage* couldn't look or play any better, so if it's a finely restructured classic you're after, look no further. The international theme definitely delivers.

G 7 C 7 P 5 M 5 O 7 **68**



It took its time getting here, but it's finally arrived! I was a HUGE fan of the original arcade *Rampage* and on the Lynx (I miss ya). This update doesn't disappoint with more smashin' and eatin' til you're sick goodness. Good graphics with some slick animation and tons of little details (look for the 'King') make this one a must-own in my book. The other guys around here think I'm a little nuts on this one, but if you're a fan of the old coin-op (it's in there!) you must get this one. Anybody that hasn't experienced this in the past needs to at least try it—it kept me up all night (or maybe that was the burrito, hmmm).

G 7 C 8 P 7 M 6 O 8 **83**



Back in the day, *Rampage* was such a cool game. Played it for days on end with a friend, and we never tired of its super-simple play mechanics. Mmn...and yet somehow, I don't like this next-gen Rampage. One would think that long-time fans, like myself, would just love to have a new version with shiny 32-bit graphics. Or new levels, a world theme, and a new secret character. But guess what? It's over for *Rampage* in my books! Done! I just don't enjoy the gameplay anymore. They've added no new play-mechanics, nothing at all. But if *Rampage* still turns you on (which, incidentally, you might not even know until you try it again), this "update" is all yours.

G 6 C 7 P 5 M 3 O 4 **65**



AeroFighters
Nintendo 64
Paradigm
Flight Simulation



If *AeroFighters Assault* were a mini game hidden inside of *Pilotwings* it would have knocked down the score. This game holds up a sign that says "We need more space!!!" I can live with the juvenile commentary (barely) but when I swoop down on a target with my 64-bit console and the frame rate drops by half, I gotta draw the line. If Nintendo approves *AeroFighters Assault* like this, the quality over quantity speech goes out the window. Careful.

G 7 C 5 P 7 M 6 O 6 **60**



My mother always used to say, "If you can't find anything nice to say then don't say anything at all." But what did she know? *AeroFighters* is a turd, pure and simple. What, did Paradigm just suddenly fire everyone with talent? This game isn't even fit to eat the flotsam from the dirty bath water of *Pilotwings*. The action is repetitive, frame rate is a joke, and the 'buddy talk' makes *Top Gun* look like *The English Patient*. Avoid.

G 5 C 5 P 6 M 4 O 5 **45**



This is by no means terrible by any stretch of the imagination, but it comes horribly close. What were once respected software developers lost a huge chunk of credibility by releasing this hobbling, second rate *Ace Combat 2* clone. What shocked me most was the control and the frame rate, considering this 'monstrous' machine's supposed capabilities. I'm certainly not going to be forking out $60 (or more) for a hunk of plastic and silicon masquerading as a 'game'. Horrible synth bass music, poor buddy talk and appallingly unrealistic flying prevented me from enduring this title for longer than an hour. Hey, there may be some cool bosses... but I wasn't prepared to waste my time to find out...

G 6 C 4 P 5 M 3 O 6 **62**



BomberMan
Nintendo 64
Hudson Soft/Nintendo
Action/Adventure/Puzzle



BomberMan play mechanics in an action adventure environment is definitely unique, it's just not that exciting. While the game is visually quite pleasing and the production values are high, the whole premise just doesn't excite me. I found it pretty fun for about two hours but will likely never go back. The multi-player game is simplistic and boring, and not really *BomberMan* at all. Sorry, I just can't dig it.

G 8 C 8 P 7 M 8 O 8 **70**



This is the type of game that needs major play before you can nail it. Well, I've recently played the crap out of *BomberMan 64*, and I think it's great. The one player Story Mode is an intelligent action platformer that I'd recommend to anyone. Oodles of technique at work here, yet with common *BomberMan* themes. The environments are well designed, fully polygonal, smooth, and the camera works very well. The important items are hidden very well too, so you'll be visiting levels over and over again. As for the Multiplayer Mode...well, it's really fun. Play with the same people often, get really good, and you'll understand.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 8 **84**



Being a bit of a shady gent from Old London Town, there's nothin' I like more than setting off a few bombs in my spare time. So you can imagine how tingly I felt, when I heard about *BomberMan 64*. Just think of all the 64-bit power, and HudsonSofts original *Bman* premise... Hmmmm. Well, at first I was a little shocked to discover that they had opted for a slightly different method of gameplay (it being more puzzle-oriented than the *Bman* of old), but I stuck at it, as only a true gamer would. To my pleasant surprise, it turned out to be an absolute belter of a game, and with the cool 3D, 4 player action, and different options, it's gotta be a definite purchase. BeederMan, BeederMan, Aieee! That one's for the Beard! Thanks Hudsonsoft, for bringing a new slant to the *BomberMan* files.

G 8 C 8 P 9 M 7 O 9 **91**



Diddy Kong Racing
Nintendo 64
Rare
Racing/Adventure



RARE indeed harnesses N64 super powers. *DKR* is a testament to what the system was bred for. Stacked up against this month's other feeble offerings it just shreds them like so much taco cheese. The adventure elements coupled with the respectable difficulty, astounding visuals, and insane longevity make this another instant N64 classic. It's a cutey pie, but it's also pure Nintendo magic.

G 10 C 9 P 9 M 8 O 9 **95**



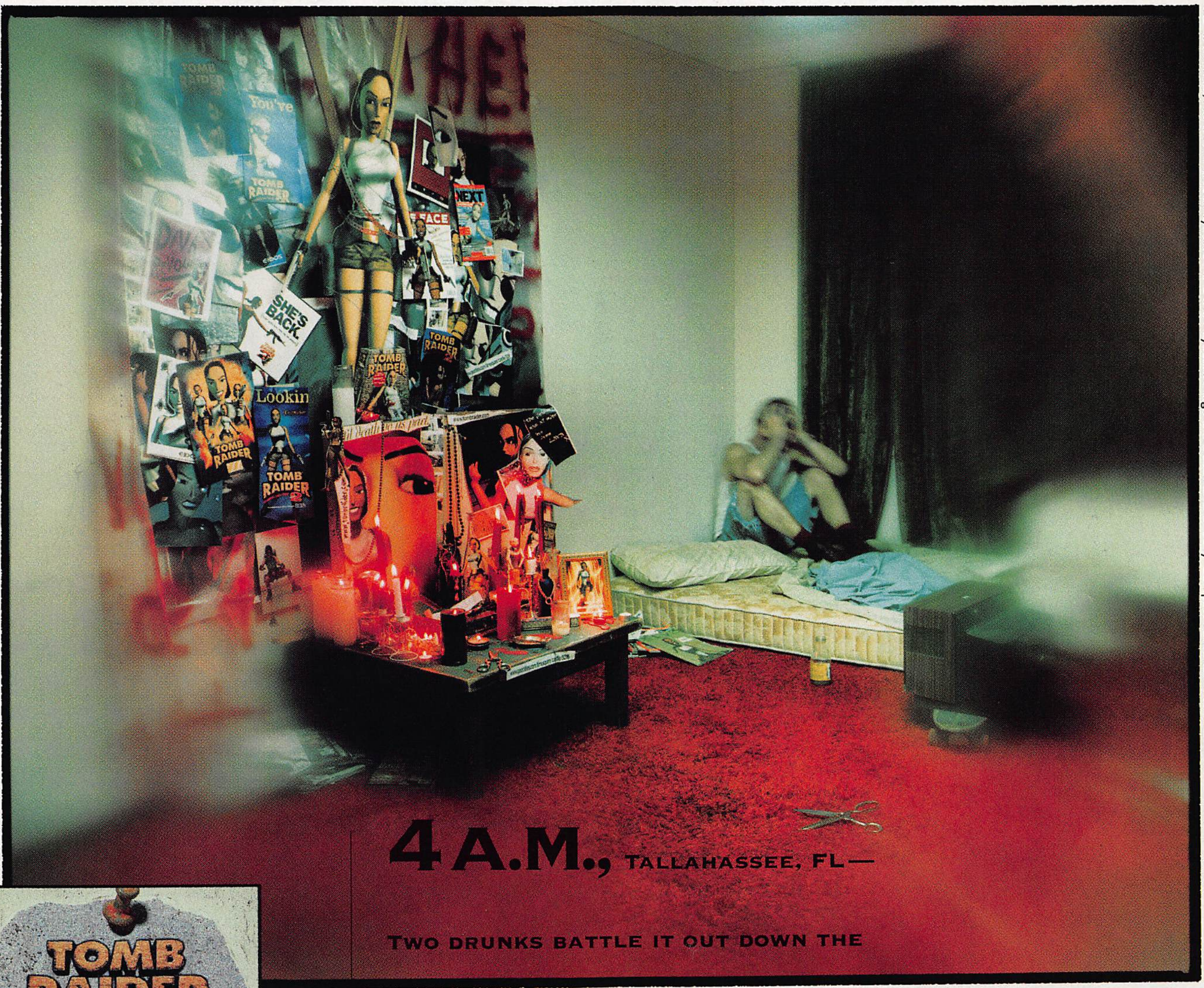
This game really impressed me. I must admit after Nintendo released the first few shots I was ready to right this off as a blatant *Mario Kart* clone but the truth is anything but. *DKR* fixes all the major problems I had with *Mario Kart 64* (see my review for details) and then goes three steps further. The graphics are gorgeous, the music is above average (for the N64), the one-player quest is superbly constructed, and best of all, the multiplayer game is both balanced and smooth. If you can get past the somewhat questionable character design, then this is the No.1 purchase for N64 owners this Christmas.

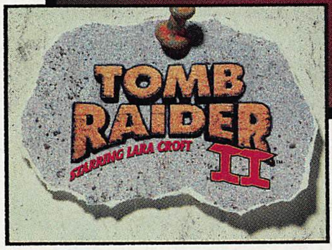
G 10 C 9 P 10 M 8 O 7 **95**

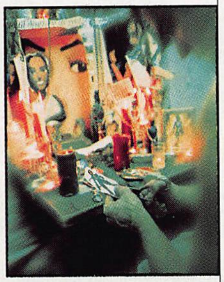


After initial skepticism about essentially the same game as *Mario Kart 64*, I was prepared for a great game with inexcusably cute characters, and hopefully some major gameplay improvements over the plumber's racing experience. I needn't have worried, as *DKR* improves on every single part of the kart experience (with the exception of those furry cutesters). Firstly, the graphics are the finest yet seen on any home system, there's much more tactical gameplay and oodles of replay value that you know to expect from Rare. Add to this some pretty intense multi-player action and you've got a game with near perfect play mechanics. Now if only the *Mario* characters were involved...

G 10 C 9 P 10 M 7 O 6 **94**







inset photos

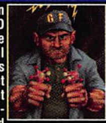
Top: The Second Coming, slated for this fall. **Bottom:** Preparing for her return.



Duke Nukem
GT Interactive
Saturn
Corridor


Wow. I have faith in Lobotomy but I never expected this. I didn't know my Saturn had this much power in it! Duke 3D blazes along on at speeds that would make Pentium owners cry. But Lobotomy shouldn't get all the credit. 3D Realms' original game design still shines through and teaches us all how corridor games ought to be: fun! I don't think it's a better game than *PowerSlave* (still the king of Saturn 3D shooters) but it's definitely an essential purchase for corridor fans, if only for the insanely addictive (and latency free) NetLink multiplayer mode. Let's rock!

G 9 · C 10 · P 10 · M 8 · O 7 · **94**


Well well, what do we have here? A Saturn game with a blazing (burn your eyelids off) 3D engine, Netlink insanity (NO LAG), and all the hardcore elements that made the PC original stand out (no Nintendo censors here). This game is madness, rivaling what you would get on a P133 with 32 megs of RAM... proving yet again that the guys at Lobotomy are programming demi-gods (godhood is in the mail), and that someone REALLY dropped the ball on Saturn development somewhere along the way. I mean with 3D graphics like this, what the hell were other developers (Sega included) doing all this time—it's enough to make me storm SoA and throttle whomever was in charge—argh! Anyway, buy it, love it, and someone please make sure that they don't make mistakes on Dural like they did this time around...oh, and someone buy Lobotomy while they're still relatively cheap (hint-hint, Sega).

G 9 · C 9 · P 9 · M 7 · O 7 · **93**


Now this is what 3D corridor gaming is about! Not only have we a tense, bloody and supremely atmospheric wade through enemy entrails, but we've been treated to the finest conversion of the PC classic ever seen, with NO CENSORSHIP!!! What's even more impressive is that the magical 3D graphics engine (complete with resplendent lighting) is running on the Saturn, a machine which many have touted as unable to handle 3D. Lobotomy has another phenomenal winner on their hands and rightly so—this supreme effort is all thanks to them. If you're a *Doom* junky, forget the tragic Saturn version and grab this as soon as you can. Sheer class.

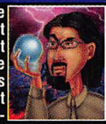
G 8 · C 10 · P 9 · M 8 · O 8 · **93**



Last Bronx
Sega
Saturn
Fighting


Even without the second disk, *Last Bronx* is still a highly impressive fighter: stunning to look at, and enjoyable to play. The characters are (for the most part) appealing, the weapons are vicious and the gameplay is straight out of the 'AM2 school of 3D fighters'. It's not quite in the same league as *VF2* or *FMM* (the gameplay isn't as intuitive or strategic), but then again, what is? I will say this though: Sega has their Model 2 translations down to an art form now! Roll on, *House of the Dead*!

G 9 · C 8 · P 8 · M 7 · O 6 · **86**


The Saturn can hang in there a while longer if we keep getting games that look this nice. This is probably about the most you could ring out of the machine. *Last Bronx* represents development team AM3's attempt at a one-on-one fighter, that while technically astounding on Saturn, unfortunately failed to engage me as much as Yu Suzuki and AM2's offerings of *VF* and *FV*. It certainly plays typically fast and fun, it's just lacking that special spark that'll plant me in my seat for long durations. If you're a good friend of the arcade version however, you'll be floored by the conversion.

G 9 · C 8 · P 8 · M 8 · O 7 · **84**


Last Bronx has a kick-ass 3D engine! The best I've ever seen in a 3D fighter on the Saturn. Niiice. Sadly though, one can only enjoy this superficial high for so long. Get past the stunning 60 fps action, gorgeous characters, and jaw-dropping BGs, and what's left is a stiff, boring fighter. I'm thinkin' it's the lame combo system and lack of reversals and side-steps. The characters don't seem to be fast enough to warrant piecing together lengthy moves, and the weapon fighting is just boring. That's it, boring! The whole game is boring, hidden beneath a well-spring of insane, Saturn-defying polygons. I tried and I tried, but I'll be staying with Sega for *VF*, not *Last Bronx*.

G 10 · C 7 · P 7 · M 8 · O 7 · **82**



Marvel Super Heroes
Capcom
Saturn
Fighting


After taking its sweet time getting here, this title only reaffirms just how great Capcom and their superior programming skill are. Die-hard Capcom fans (all of you) need this title, and casual gamers will find it easier to come to grips with than the Alpha series. Insanely smooth animation with RAM cart (you'll need to buy an import cart), and more than respectable without, *MSH* proves that Capcom still knows what makes a great game. Now we just need to get ahold of *SF vs XMen* and make sure they bring the new RAM cart over here—start the email campaign now, folks. Oh, and these numbers are for the non-cart version (bump up graphics a notch and the overall score five points with it).

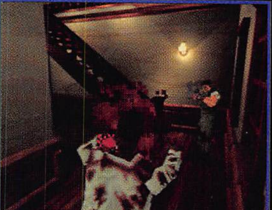
G 8 · C 9 · P 9 · M 7 · O 7 · **87**


As developers leave the Saturn in droves it's nice to know that Capcom are still standing by the king of 2D. Slow down notwithstanding (you do get used to it) this is a fantastic conversion of a great coin-op. It's not what I would call a 'serious' fighter (i.e.. its not a true test of skill), but the insane combos and awesomely animated characters make for a very satisfying and enjoyable beat 'em up. Even if you don't want to own this, its well worth a rental.

G 9 · C 9 · P 8 · M 7 · O 6 · **89**


Well, well, well. What do we 'ave 'ere then? Actually, it would appear that we have one of my all-time fave games. And it's looking soooo good on the Saturn, I have just gotta play it some more... What?! ... Oh you want me to write about it, do you? Okay. Capcom is simply god-like. That's a fact of life. This game is phenomenally accurate, and brings most of the arcade to you on the small screen. All the characters, all the moves, most of the animation etc.. Bargain! My only beef is that the Japanese version has the little extras such as the Anita code and the RAM cartridge compatibility. Still, it's the best version out there (yep, better than the PSX version, Hah!). So whatcha starin' at Bub? Want Some?? Eh?

G 9 · C 9 · P 8 · M 9 · O 7 · **93**



Resident Evil
Capcom
Saturn
Adventure/Horror


You can't find a more manic *RE* fan than me. For instance, I've played through every single version (well, all four) many times... it's simply one of my favorite games of all time. If I had to place the various versions in order, the Saturn edition would be on the bottom simply because the graphics can't touch the PS original, but the atmosphere, theme and all-around terrifying play experience is the same. If all you've got is a Saturn, pick this up *now*. If you already have the PS version, get *Director's Cut* instead, unless somewhat-poor new palette-swapped costumes, two Tyrants in Chris's quest (for a total of three Tyrant battles), a "new enemy" that's really just a Hunter with new textures and the Battle Mode really appeal to you.

G 8 · C 8 · P 9 · M 10 · O 7 · **90**


The question is: how much does the lack of gouraud shading and transparencies affect the awesome experience that is *Resident Evil*? The answer is: not much. *RE* is still as terrifying and engrossing as the day it was released. If you've never played through the PS version (and most Saturn owners probably won't), you're in for a real treat. Plus you get new costumes and a cool Battle Mode thrown in for free. It's taken its time, but horror has finally come home to the Saturn.

G 8 · C 8 · P 9 · M 8 · O 9 · **92**


Well, Capcom finally gets *Resident Evil* to all the Saturn-only folks out there, but did it really have to take this long? I mean, after doing seemingly countless feasability studies they finally deliver an almost exact port of the PS version, minus some gouraud shading and transparencies—did it really require that much thinking? Anyway, besides the slight hit in graphic quality it's a tad more difficult than the PS rev was and anyone that actually hasn't played it yet should go and get it now. Me, I'm spending my money on *MSH* seeing as how it rocks the PS version, and I don't have to wait an extra 18 months to get it.

G 8 · C 7 · P 8 · M 8 · O 9 · **80**



Silhouette Mirage
ESP
Saturn
Action/Platform


Watching my Saturn do what it was meant to do, and do it so well, makes me sad. Especially knowing that these brilliant developers command no respect with SOA. *Silhouette Mirage* is a gamers game. It's old school meets new school with a tap from Treasure's magic wand. Inventive, creative, visually astounding and audibly amazing no SS action fan should be without it. Unforgettable.

G 9 · C 10 · P 10 · M 9 · O 9 · **95**


Once again Treasure applies their 2D magic to the Saturn with predictably stunning results. *SM* feels a lot like *Dynamite Heady*—a single player odyssey with innovative game mechanics and boss encounters to die for. The graphics are 2D mania, the soundtrack is aural sex, and the gameplay is pure Treasure all the way. I think the days of the 'play through the whole game in one go' structure are coming to end, but I'll do it one more time for *SM*. If SOA don't release this over here I'll hurt them.

G 9 · C 9 · P 9 · M 9 · O 9 · **93**


I think I live for Treasure gameplay. It's like they get inside my head and determine exactly what play-mechanics I'm looking for. They do this every time! *Silhouette Mirage* is no different. I actually prefer it to *Mischief Makers*, based-on the beautiful 2D action. Just look at that scrolling! That animation! That hard-core 2D! The Saturn eats up games like this, and Treasure knows exactly how to feed the beast. It's their latest gameplay innovation that makes it all so special though. The Silhouette/Mirage attacking technique is so, so new. It's also addicting, immediately fun, and forces you to stay on the ball at all times...especially against those bosses. Don't forget awesome music and perfectly tough difficulty. I want *Guardian Heroes 2* next!

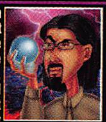
G 9 · C 9 · P 9 · M 9 · O 10 · **95**



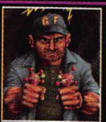
Zero 5
Telegames
Jag
Shooter


Zero 5's got some flaws, like the insanely hard trench levels, but it's a well produced, and shall we say, vivid shooter in the Atari tradition. If you're still into your Jag (and who doesn't whip it out for kicks once in awhile, huh?) you certainly could do worse. Fluid animation, a near *Tempest 2000* pace, and quite the cool techno soundtrack (better than most N64 tunes if you ask me) equals a cool little trip around the galaxy, worth taking.

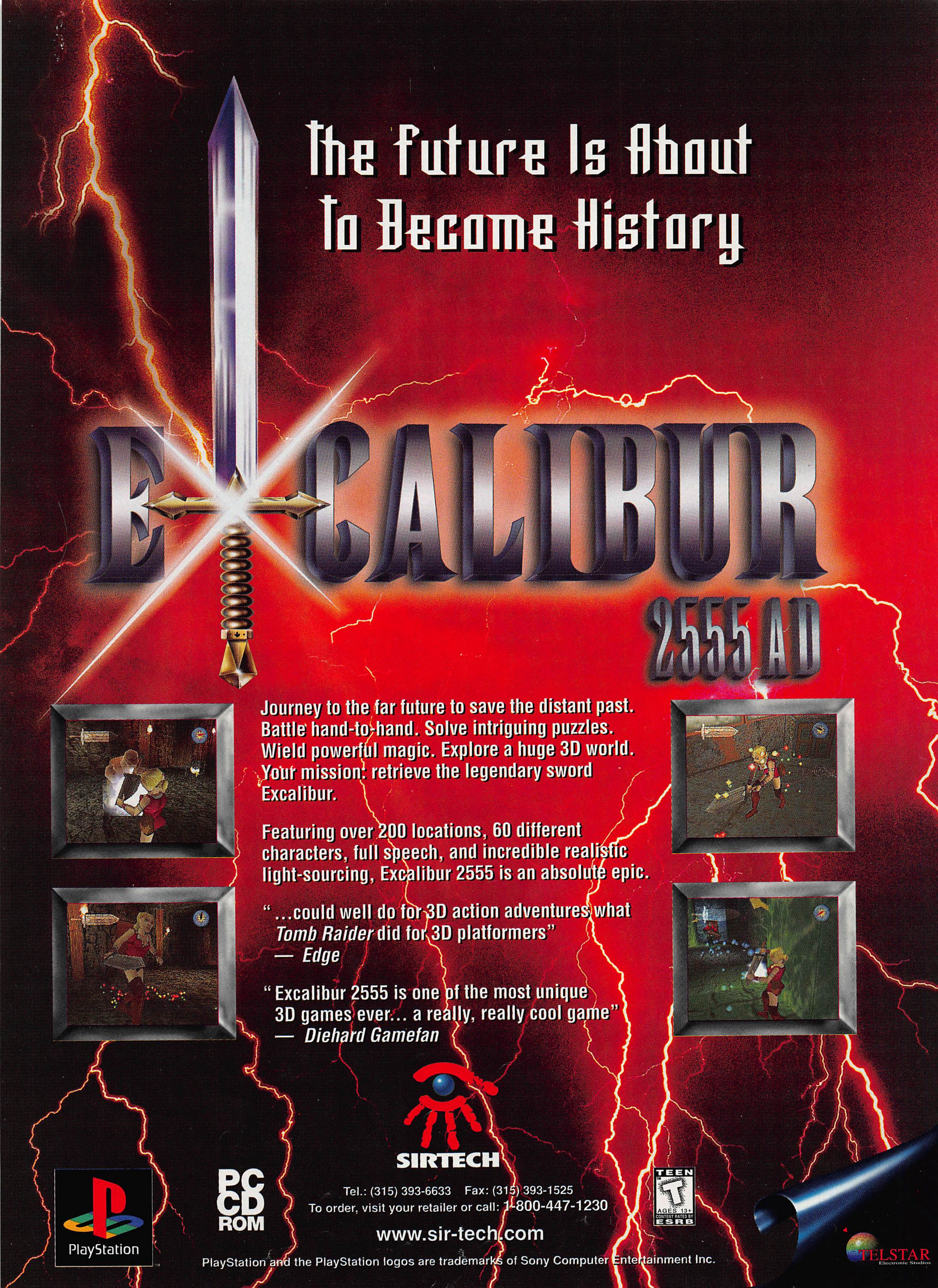
G 8 · C 7 · P 7 · M 8 · O 8 · **75**


Holy cow, it's a Jaguar game! I'd been curious about this title ever since I saw that one screen shot many moons ago in the hallowed pages of GF. Finally, I was able to see the game last night, and uh, hmm, it's very interesting. Unique is also a word that springs to mind. This game is just really weird, with you controlling this funky looking spaceship through some multi-colored star fields shooting the same enemies over and over. Then the game switches to a first person "move the cursor" bit, and then to a speedy run down a trench. At this point, I stopped playing. I'm not going to be harsh on this, 'cause what's the point. It's a curiosity, nothing more. Then again, you know what that did to the cat. Cool tunes, though.

G 6 · C 6 · P 3 · M 7 · O 7 · **66**


So ya' thought the Jaguar was buried in that spooky pet cemetery down that trail in the back of your house, eh? Think again! Telegames proves that there is still a legion of hardcore Atari fans around, even if Atari isn't. *Zero 5* is a decent space combat shooter, although it looks quite dated even by Jag standards, but the music is better than 90% of the N64 games out there. Some intense gameplay helps things out, though. Despite some lackluster graphics I felt compelled to play it anyway... hmmmm, maybe it had something to do with the difficulty on stage 3. Ah well, if you still have your Jag you may want to look into this one, if only to see what can happen in two years development time. Oh, and if you're really lucky we may cover more Jag games in the future, cause we're just that cool.

G 7 · C 6 · P 4 · M 8 · O 7 · **70**


The Future Is About
To Become History
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nba® action 98
tap Z
tap X
aim at hoop
tap B
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hard stuff
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Some people go to extremes to play NBA® Action 98. They should. In this game, you're up against guys who'd like nothing better than to pound your puny torso into the court. We're talking every NBA player, every NBA team, all 29 Arenas. Team specific plays. Behind the back passes. Alley oops. It's all here. Chick Hearn even calls the plays. NBA Action 98. See how you measure up.
PLAYER BUILDER
Position PF
Height 6'11"
Weight 213
Jersey Number 7
Appearance 7
Pts Remaining 250
Agility 50
Speed 50
Shooting 50
Endurance 50
NBA action 98
SEGA SATURN
SEGA SATURN
KIDS TO ADULTS
Windows® 95
CD-ROM
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Hocus Pocus

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VIEWPOINT GAME OF YOUR CHOICE

SECOND PRIZE:
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THIRD PRIZE:
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GXTV is the world's first video game TV with hyper-amplified sound and graphics. Enhance the thrill of gaming with adjustable speaker doors, stereo surround sound and a 15-watt sub woofer. Plus, the intense screen graphics will make you feel like your head's right inside the game. GXTV is also a 181-channel, 13" stereo TV with two A/V inputs, stereo headphone jack, backlit remote control and tilt/swivel stand. So whatcha waitin' for? Send in those codes and maybe you can win one of these GXTVs for yourself!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS MONTH'S WINNERS!



The mighty Monitaur seeks the finest cheats, secrets and tips known to humanity, and we need them from YOU!! We'll look over all the codes you send and award a magnificent Grand Prize every single month! Remember, no cheap codes from previously published US magazines! Winners will be drawn each month and displayed in the only place where cheaters prosper. (Current subscribers who win a subscription will receive a one-year extension.)

SEND YOUR CARDS AND LETTERS TO:
Hocus Pocus
5137 Clareton Drive
Suite 210
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

grand prize winner:
anthony p. castillo
los angeles, ca

first prize winner:
gregory urchin
new york, ny

second prize winner:
andrea williams
laverne, ca

third prize winner:
matt e. payton
redmond, wa


ONE
ONE MAN. ONE SOLUTION. ONE STATE OF MIND.
TEEN
AGES 13+
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
PlayStation
NOVEMBER 1997
Co-Developed by
VISUAL CONCEPTS
ASC GAMES
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Clayfighter 63 1/3

Secret characters and CLAYTALITIES!!!

Enter the following codes at the character select screen to play 3 secret fighters!



Sumo Santa - Hold the Left Shift button, and tap Light punch, Medium punch, Heavy punch, Heavy kick, Medium kick, and Light kick.

Dr. Kiln - Hold the Left Shift button, and tap Light kick, Medium kick, Heavy kick, Heavy punch, Medium punch, and Light punch.

Boogerman - Hold the Left Shift button, and press up, right, down, left, right, and left on the D-pad

CLAYTALITIES!!!

EarthWorm Jim:

"Cow from the Sky" - down, down, down, Right Shift, Left Shift (one hop away)
Knock off Top Half - back, down, forward, Right Shift (next)
Squish Claytality - back, back, forward, forward, Right Shift
Squeeze Claytality - down, forward, back, back, Left Shift (next)
Launch from Island - down, down, back, forward, Right Shift



Kung Pow:

Bruce Lee Squish - down, down, down (1.5 body lengths away)
Slice and Dice - forward, forward, forward (1 body length away)
Round Toss - down, down, forward, forward (next)
Pan Toss - forward, down, back, down (2 body lengths away)

T. Hoppy:

Rabbit Pellets - Half Circle Back + Left Shift (a tad away)
Rabbit out of Hat - back, back, forward, forward, Right Shift (a tad away)
Thwomp - forward, forward, forward, forward (close)

Taffy:

Slap Silly - down, down, forward, forward, Right Shift (a bit away)
Who da man! - Quarter Circle Forward + Right Shift (close)
Fireworks - back, forward, back, forward (a bit away)
Splat - Left Shift, Right Shift, Left Shift, Right Shift (a bit away)

Ickybod Clay:

Demon Spin - Half Circle Forward + Left Shift (a bit away)
Scary - down, down, forward, back, Right Shift (a bit away)

Houngan:

Hand Grope - down, down, down, Left Shift (close)
Bad Hand - down, down, right, left, Right Shift (away)
Bad Mojo - Half Circle Forward + Left Shift (away)
See ya Clucky - down, diag. down/forward, forward, diag. down/forward, down (a tad away)

Blob:

Da Bomb - back, down, forward + Right Shift (next)
Meat Grinder - down, down, down + Left Shift (next)
Hit and Run - down, down, back, forward + Heavy punch (1 hop away)
PacMan - Quarter Circle Back + Right Shift (next)
Squish Claytality - Left Shift, Right Shift, down, down (next)
Squeeze Claytality - down, down, forward, forward, down (few steps away)
Bite - Left Shift, down, down, right, Right Shift (next)
Knock Off Top Half - Quarter Circle Forward + Right Shift (next)
Launch from the Island - down, down, Left Shift, down (next)

Bad Mr. Frosty:

Hat Smash - Right Shift, down, down, forward (next)
Snowcone Squeeze - back, down, down, forward, Left Shift (next)
Knock Off Top Half - forward, down, back, back (few steps away)
Squish Claytality - down, back, down, back (few steps away)
Launch from the Island - down, down, Left Shift, Right Shift (next)

Bonker:

Drum Claytality - forward, down, forward (.5 body lengths away)
Cannon Claytality - down, down, down, down (next)
Off the Island Claytality - forward, back, back, forward (next)
Headbutt Claytality - forward, forward, forward (next)

Sumo Santa:

Phat Assault - down, down, down, Right Shift (1 hop away)
Sumo Squash - back, back, forward, back (a bit away)

Dr. Kiln:

Death X-ray - back, down, down, back (1 body length away)
Blood Pressure Squeeze - down, down, down (1 body length away)
Cut in Half - forward, forward, forward (next)
Off the Island - down, forward, back, forward (next)

Boogerman:

Flaming Fart - down, down, back, back, forward, forward, Right Shift (few steps away)
Toiletality - down, down, back, back, Medium punch (1 hop away)
Knock off Top Half - back, forward, down, down, Right Shift (close)
Squish Claytality - down, forward, down, Left Shift (close)
Squeeze Claytality - down, down, down, Right Shift (close)
Launch from Island - forward, back, down, back, forward, Left Shift (next)





Final Fantasy VII

Hard-core Game Shark Codes!!!

Infinite Cure 100HP
- 8009B378 9000

Time Stops on Menu
- 8009B9FC 0000
- 800988FA 0000

Infinite Money
- 8009B9F8 FFFF

Infinite HP Hero
- 800F84A4 7000

Infinite MP Hero
- 800F84A0 03E7

Speeds The Movement up During The Game
- 80050270 7D41

Limit Speeds up Hero
- 800F6134 00FF

Infinite HP Tifa
- 800F8574 7000

Save Everywhere
- 8009BA3E 0000

Have Best Weapon (Cloud)
- 8009B462 C68F

Have Master Summon (Monster) Materia
- 3009B754 005A

Have Master Magic Materia
- 3009B710 0049

Have Master Command Materia
- 3009B6AC 0030

Have Learning Enemy Specials Materia
- 3009B6A8 002C

Play as Aerith - 3rd Position - 801D3330 3313

Body Heat Always Stays at 31 Degrees
- 80074DC4 2000

Start With Gold Chocobo
- 800E54B4 0004

Cloud has have all possible Limit Attack
- 8009C75A 0FFF

Tifa has all possible Limit Attack
- 8009C862 0FFF

Barrett has all possible Limit Attack
- 8009C7DE 0FFF

SAVE ANYWHERE
- 8009D2A6 0000

Unlimited Gil
- 8009D260 FFFF

ALWAYS gives you 65535 EXP points after battle
- 8009D7D8 FFFF

Always gives you 50000 AP Point after battle
- 8009D7DC C350

Max out any Materia on 1st Materia Item slot!
- 8009CE62 0100

Have 9999 Gold Points at the Golden Saucer
- 8009D3D2 270F

Have 50000 Battle Points at the Golden Saucer
- 8009D3D8 C350

Alternate colors:

To access the second outfit of each character, at the normal select screen, hold up for 2-3 seconds if your character is on the top row, or hold down for 2-3 seconds if you character is on the bottom row.



No Gems:

To disable all Gems during Versus mode, both players must hold the Left and Right Shift buttons after selecting their character until the match starts. The text "NO GEMS" will appear at the bottom of the screen for the remainder of the match.

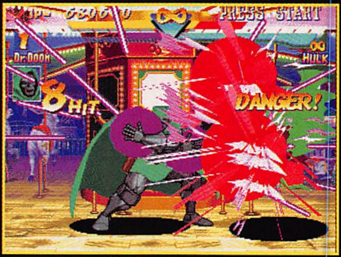


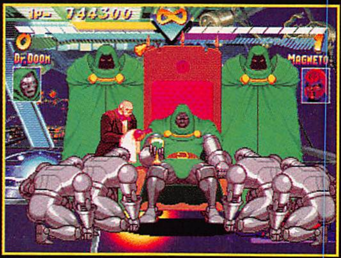
Doctor Doom:

To play the Doomster, you must beat the game on Default settings. Start a new game on default settings and at the character select screen, press down, down. While still holding down, press and hold the A button, B button, and finally the C button. Doctor Doom will be playable and has the following moves:

Photon Charge - Quarter Circle Forward + Any punch (can be done in the air)
Photon Shock - Quarter Circle Back + Any punch (can be done in the air)
Molecular Shield - Half Circle Back + Any kick
Flying - Quarter Circle Back + Any two kicks
Infinity Special: Photon Array - Quarter Circle Forward + Any two punches (can be done in the air)







Thanos:

To play the omnipotent Thanos, you must beat the game on Default settings. Start a new game on default settings and at the character select screen, press up, up. While still holding up, press and hold the Z button, the Y button, and finally the X button. Thanos' godly might will be at your disposal and uses the following moves:

Divine Charge - Quarter Circle Forward + Any punch (can be done in the air)
Bubble Trap - Half Circle Forward + Any kick
Infinity Specials (HE HAS SIX!): All are done with a back, down, diag. down/back motion and the following buttons:

Reality Gem - Jab punch
Space Gem - Strong punch
Power Gem - Fierce punch
Time Gem - Short kick
Soul Gem - Forward kick
Mind Gem - Roundhouse kick







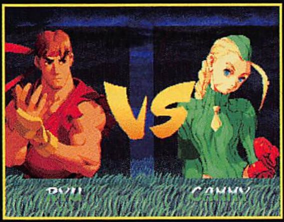


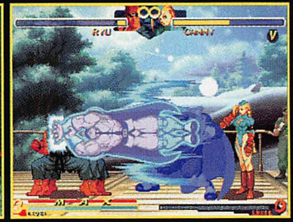
Street Fighter Collection

(Saturn and PSX)- Cammy, Evil Ryu, and others!! JOY!!!

Cammy

To play as Cammy in Street Fighter Alpha 2 Gold, beat the game in Arcade mode on any difficulty with M. Bison. You must get the top score when you beat the game. Enter your initials as "CAM" and you'll be able to play Cammy in Practice and Versus modes.





Evil Ryu

To play Evil Ryu, simply press Start twice while highlighting Ryu on the character select screen.

Super Gouki

To play Super Gouki, simply press Start five times while highlighting Gouki on the character select screen.

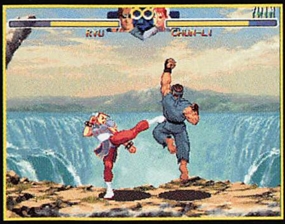
Evil Sakura

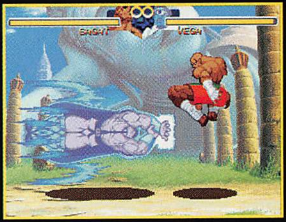
To play Evil Sakura, simply press Start five times while highlighting Sakura on the character select screen.

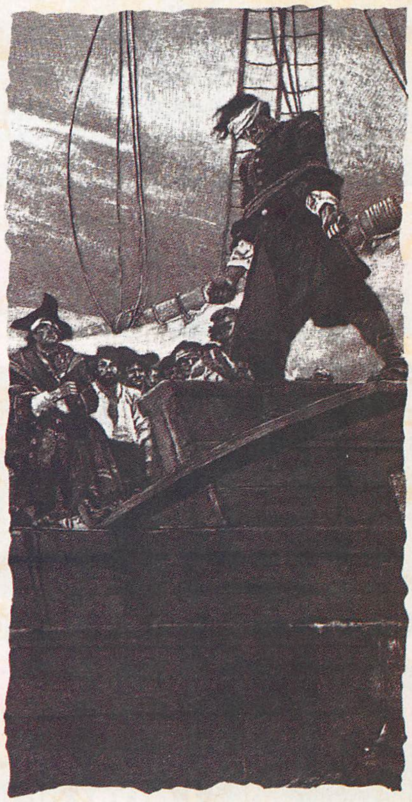


Championship Characters

To get the Championship versions of Ryu, Ken, Zangief, Dhalsim, Sagat, M.Bison, and Chun Li, simply highlight each respective character and press Start once.

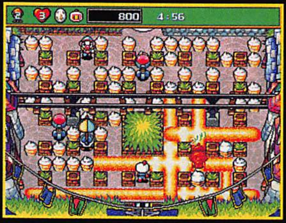






Saturn Bomberman
Oodles of Codes!!

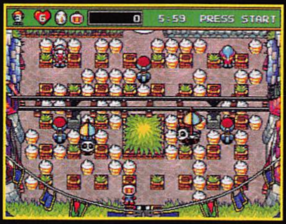
Powered up weaponry:
To start a game with some powerful explosives, at the title screen, hold the following buttons: Left Shift, Right Shift, A, and diag. up/left on the D-pad.



Level Select:
Enter the following codes at the title screen for easy level access:

Level 2: Hold Left Shift, Right Shift, B, and diag. up/left on the D-pad
Level 3: Hold Left Shift, Right Shift, C, and diag. up/right on the D-pad
Level 4: Hold Left Shift, Right Shift, X, and diag. up/right on the D-pad
Level 5: Hold Left Shift, Right Shift, Y, and diag. up/left on the D-pad
Ending: Hold Left Shift, Right Shift, Z, and down on the D-pad

Start with 6 lives:
To start with 6 lives, play the game between 10-11 am (or better yet, set your Saturn clock between 10-11am)



Two Secret Characters:
To use the two secret characters during Battle mode, at the Match play screen, hold the Left and Right Shift button till you hear a confirmation chime. This will allow you access to Manto, a powerful beat, and Kuno, a super speedy blonde.



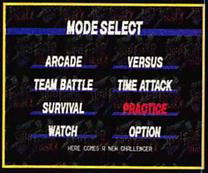
Change Background colors:
To change the background colors of the Bomberman arenas for Battle mode, hold the X, Y, and Z buttons at the stage select screen until you hear a sound. You can now change the background colors of each stage by pressing up or down on the D-pad on the stage select screen.





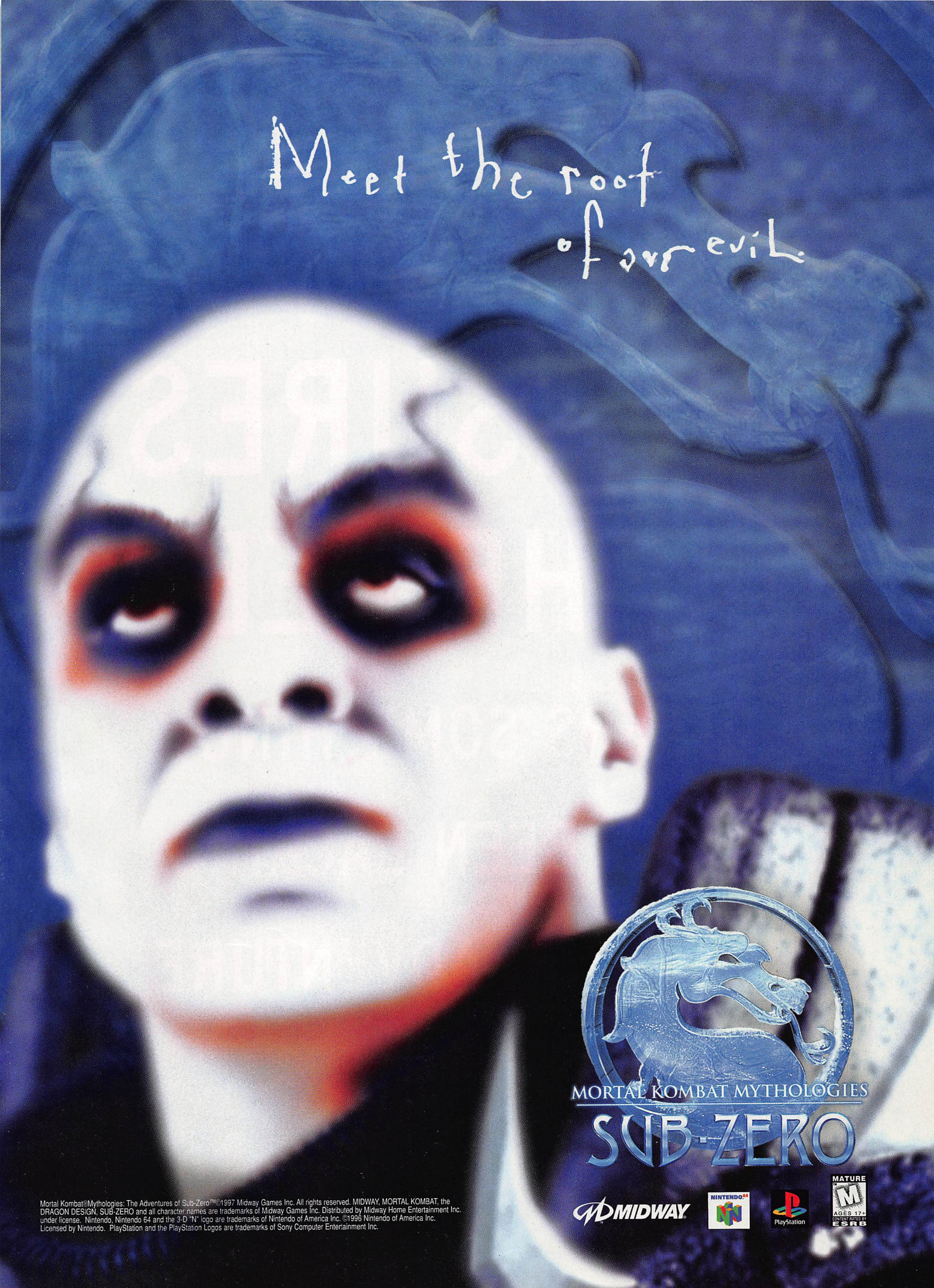
Street Fighter EX + alpha (import)
All character code!!

To enable all characters on this great import fighter, at the mode select screen, highlight PRACTICE, and hold the Start button. While holding the Start button, press up, right, down, and right on the D-pad. Then, release the Start button and press the Start button again. The text "Here Comes A New Challenger!" should appear. You now have all the secret characters in the game.









Meet the root of our evil.
MORTAL KOMBAT MYTHOLOGIES
SUB-ZERO
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MIDWAY
NINTENDO64
PlayStation
MATURE
M
AGES 17+
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

BESIDES DANGER

AND INTRIGUE,

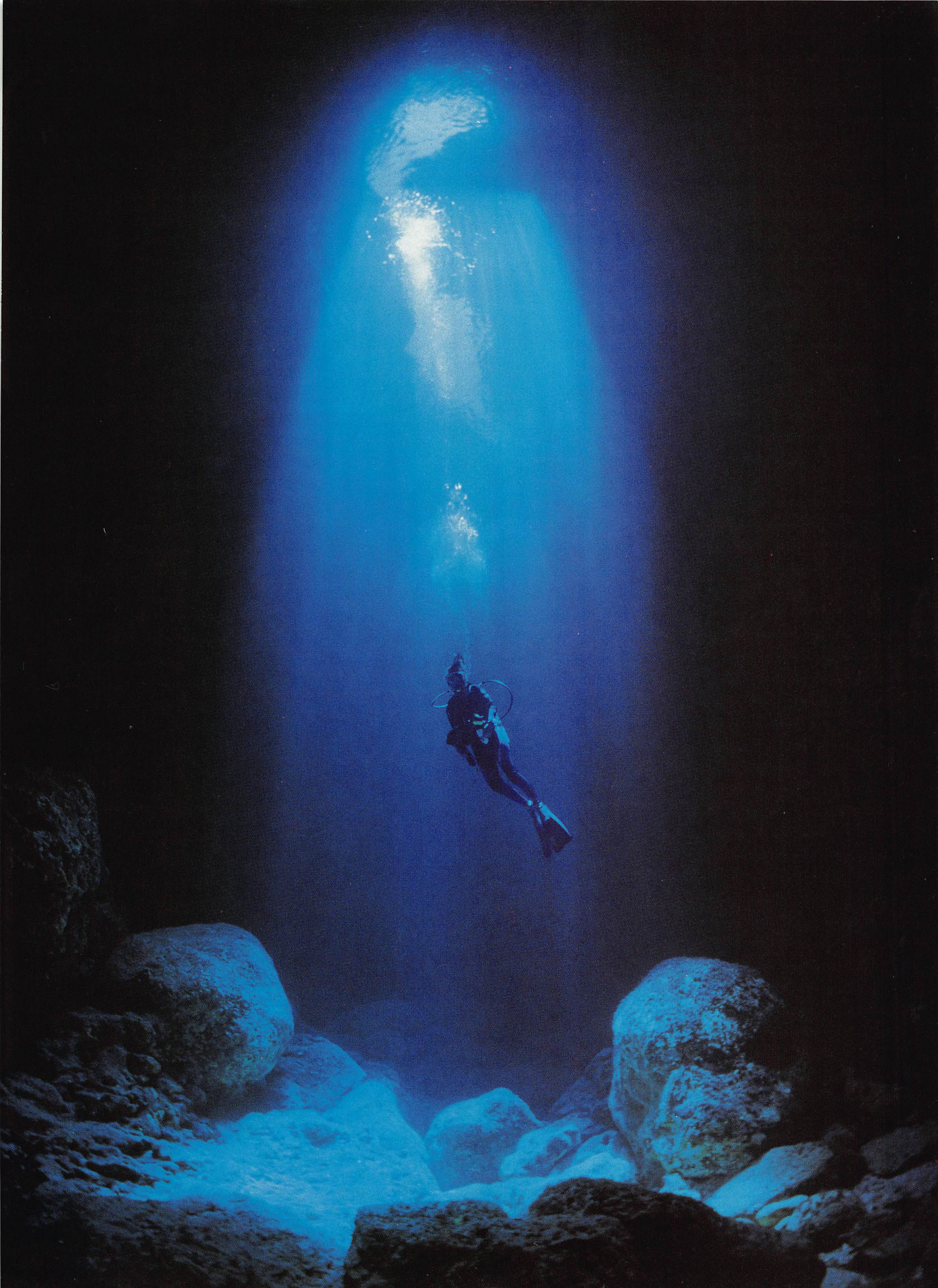
TREASURES OF THE DEEP

OFFERS SOMETHING

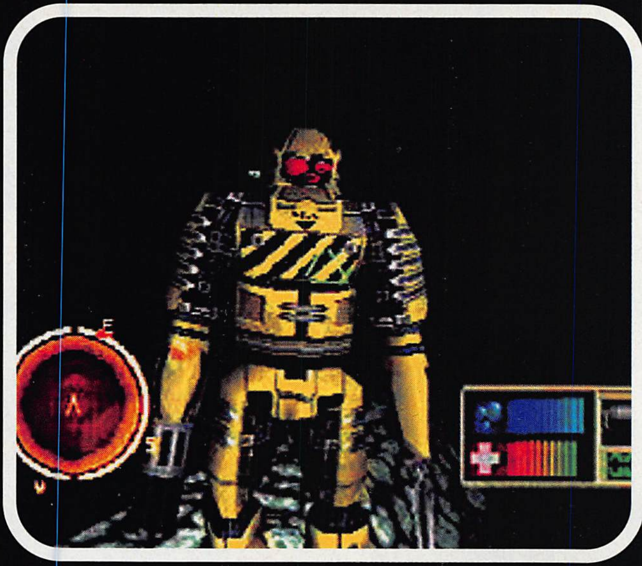
THAT'S BEEN LACKING

IN ACTION/ADVENTURE

GAMES.



What's the missing ingredient from action and adventure games? Salt water. *Treasures of the Deep*™ places you in the role of Jack Runyan, ex-Navy Seal. Your global treasure trek whisks you from the shark-infested Great Barrier Reef to the foreboding abyss of the Mariana Trench. You'll utilize lethal high-tech weaponry and submersibles as you explore sunken ships, battle sea monsters and thwart terrorists. Grab your scuba gear. It's time to dive into danger.

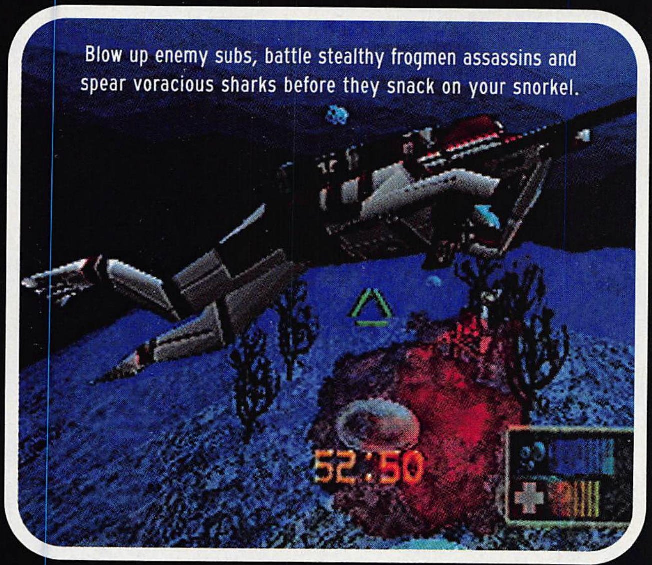


Your underwater hardware is 100% high-tech: robotic vehicles, homing torpedoes and heat seeking mines are all at your disposal.

ACTION AND



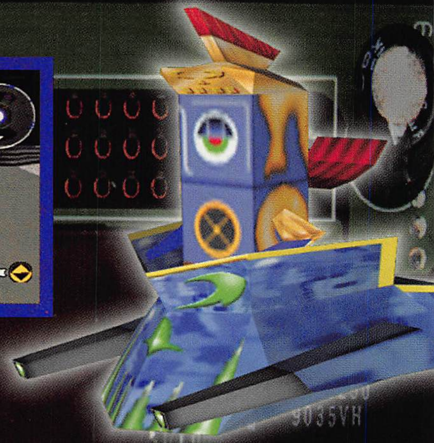
14 treasure-hunting missions, including Antarctica, the Bermuda Triangle and the sunken Aztec ruins off the Yucatan Peninsula.



Blow up enemy subs, battle stealthy frogmen assassins and spear voracious sharks before they snack on your snorkel.


The most striking 3-D world in all of game-dom. Beautiful sea creatures propel themselves with polygon perfection.
Pilot 8 state-of-the-art submersibles. Amass your fortune and trade up from a USN RV-1 mini-sub to a deadly Viper attack sub.
ADVENTURE.
Explore mysterious wrecks, retrieve a lost satellite, defuse a nuclear warhead, then treat yourself to some alligator shoes.
TREASURES OF THE DEEP
THIS TIME, YOU'RE IN OVER YOUR HEAD.
TEEN
T
AGES 13+
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
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Here's a brief update on EA's *Reboot*. We did a preview a couple of months back, but we wanted to give you another look at how this cool title (based on the CG show of the same name) is shaping up.

As Storm mentioned in the preview, it's great fun just maneuvering Bob (the hero) as he jets around on his hoverboard doing all sorts of jumps, cruising up walls in pseudo-skateboard style and collecting power-ups (all with the power of analog control). The game handles well—especially with the analog pad—although it's mighty tricky getting the hang of it at first. Seeing as how he's such a blast to control, though, no complaints.

The graphics haven't changed much since our last rev, but special note goes to some of the weapon effects from Bob's gun: the flame thrower is especially impressive, and features hot (haha) flame effects. Other nice touches include the Wipeout-esque trail off of Bob's hoverboard, and some nice lighting effects from explosions and such—all at a constant (no slowdown) 30 FPS. The horizon is sufficiently distant, so there shouldn't be any complaints on the draw-in issue, either.

The music is excellent. I was sitting around (uh, working, I mean) and the game was demoing as a small group of GF employees popped their heads into my lowly cubicle just to check out what game had such terrific music (of course they soon departed—can't hang around with the new guy too much, he might get the impression that he's liked or something). A great score (Redbook to 'boot) is apparently in the offing.

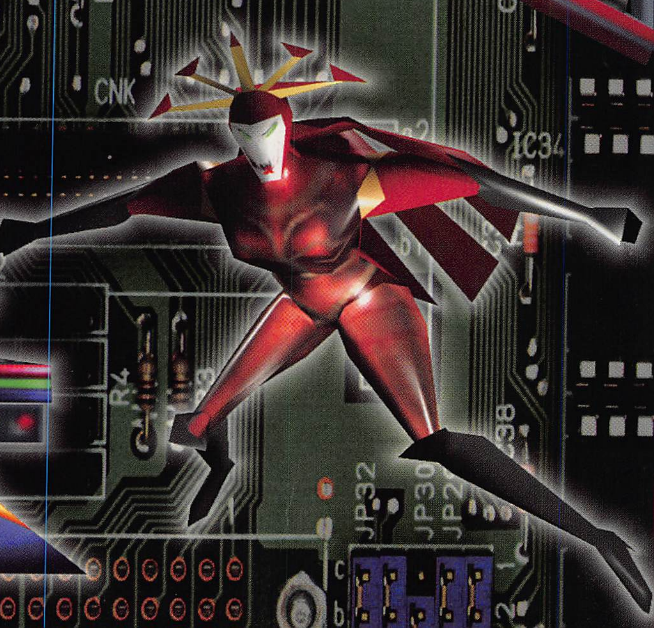
We'll (well, I, or maybe Storm) will be back with the full review on this good-looking, fun playing game as soon as the final puts in an appearance. Until then, hang in there and prepare for the best (OK, only) hoverboard action game on the PS, and in the mean time pick up a shiny new analog pad to go with it. ***ECM***

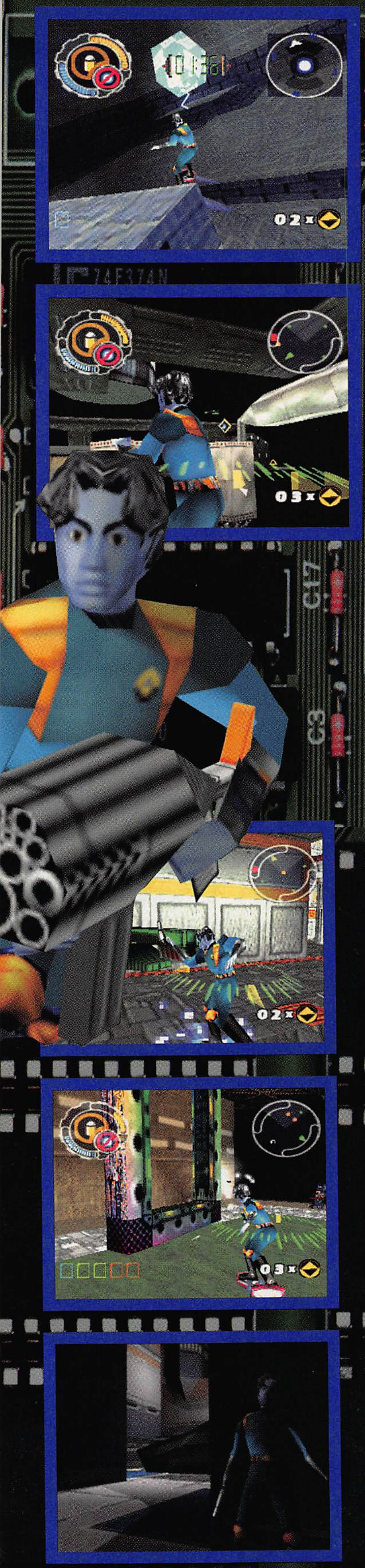










A BREIF Q&A WITH ELECTRONIC ARTS CANADA



GameFan: What kind of moves will Bob have in the game?

George: There's your standard kind of strafing, turning, banking. There's a loop which will give him excess height so he might be able to get a pick or something that is floating in the air that he wouldn't be able to get to if he just jumped normally. The jumping is kind of interesting because you have to press the button and then jump on release as opposed to most arcade games you have to press buttons. There are a lot of animations, and the environment affects how he moves...if an explosion goes off near him, he tries to steady himself as he's knocked off balance; when he bumps a wall, he kinda pushes himself off the wall,; if he collides into a wall, there's about four different death sequences that happen in-game...and there's all the death scenes that happen in all the pre-rendered sequences. So, there are a lot of animations actually and it looks really nice. And there's also a lot of programmatic noise in the skeleton that'll give him a little bit more life. He bounces as well, so he's got a lot of energy and he doesn't look like a static model.

GameFan: If I were asked to describe how the game feels, I would say it is a cross between *Tomb Raider*, with its 3rd-person perspective and go-anywhere exploration; and *Tunnel B-1*, with beautiful hi-res environments and light-sourcing; and an engine similar to *Warhawk*. Was there any specific title or titles which inspired *Reboot*?

Jules: Crazy as it sounds, but I think of *Road Rash*, just with that sort of biking experience in a way. *Warhawk* was definitely one of the ones that we all played quite a bit. *Tomb Raider*, of course wasn't out. It was released after we began the design.

George: *Wipeout*'s got a really nice gameplay feel to it the way the vehicles move around.

GameFan: Will there be any puzzle elements to the game, or will it focus solely on the zipboarding based action?

Jules: Truthfully, I'd say not as many as we'd hoped for. There are so-called puzzles...there are items you have to collect...so you have to find things to be able progress through levels. I can't avoid the fact that this is a 3D shooter. This guy [indicates George]; if it weren't for him we probably wouldn't have any puzzles in it.

George: There are certain things that you have to consider, like how to take care of your enemies and getting over obstacles...strafing and jumping and that kind of thing, or getting from platform to platform. So I guess you could sort of say, that's kind of a puzzle. You've got limited resources as far as energy and you have to go around and get pick-ups, it's got all of the standard sort of gameplay items.

UPDATE

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - EA CANADA	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - EA	DIFFICULTY - UNKNOWN
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - EARLY '98



ECM
So you always wanted to ride that board from Back to the Future 2, eh?

THE BIGGER THE HARDER










THEY ARE, THEY DIE.
"Turok: Dinosaur Hunter is the best corridor shooter on the Nintendo 64!"
-GamePro
"Turok is a sure fire hit in every category, and a must have for all N64 owners..."
-Game Informer
"Turok may well be one of the best-looking and best playing first person shooters ever."
-Ultra Game Players
THE BIGGEST GAME OF ALL IS THE BIGGEST GAME ON N64.
TUROK
DINOSAUR HUNTER
BOSS
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AGES 17+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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BATMAN & ROBIN

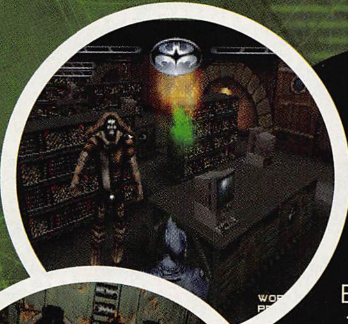




ACCLAIM 1997-98 UPDATE

Acclaim

What do you think of when you hear the name Acclaim? A never-ending stream of mediocre movie licenses? Yup, us too. But Acclaim is fully aware of their dodgy reputation and are making a comeback attempt in the best possible way: by changing their company policy from *quantity* to *quality*. By cutting back on the number of games produced and focusing more on their A-grade titles, Acclaim hope to emerge re-born as a respected and successful publisher. And if their latest line-up of titles is anything to go by, they may just pull it off...







BATMAN & ROBIN (PS)

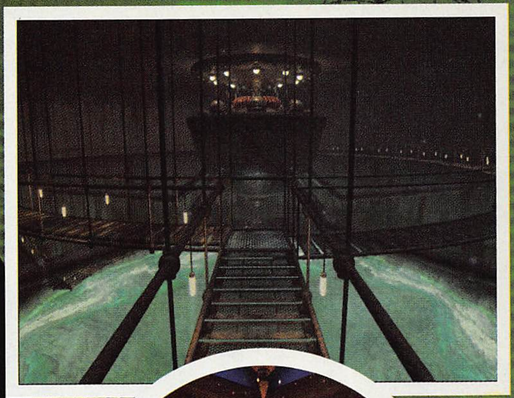
The whole Bat family (George, Chris and Alicia) take on Mr. Freeze and Poison Ivy in this 3D graphic adventure from UK-based developers, Probe Software. Set over three 'game days' in Gotham City the game is split into two distinct sections: *Die Hard Trilogy* style driving bits and *Tomb Raider* style explorational bits. As either Batman, Robin or Batgirl you must explore Gotham City (10 square kilometers big) by vehicle or by foot, discovering clues that will lead you to the super-villains, then kicking the bejeezus out of them. You get all sorts of bat gadgets to aid you in your quest and the game runs on a real time clock meaning that if you're not in the right place at the right time you could miss some crucial event.

Currently the game looks great, with detailed character models (including digitized faces—true-to-life Alicia looks like a stroke victim!), a smooth frame rate, and environments straight out of the movie. The soundtrack is based on





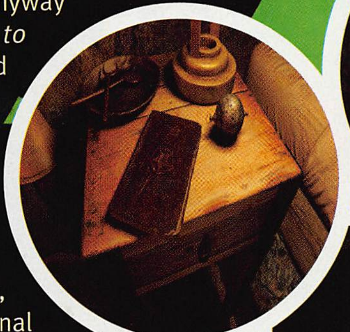
Elliot Goldenthal's OST (where art thou, Danny Elfman? *sigh*) and Probe has been allowed to use sound bites from the actual actors ('Cool party!' etc.). But most importantly—Batman's cape moves as it ought to. Now if only Probe could lend Sony a helping hand with Spawn...



RIVEN (PS)



I don't know how many copies *Myst* has actually sold, but whatever the number is, it's waaaay too many. Anyway *Riven: The Sequel to Myst*, is on its way and according to Acclaim it's going to hit PS before it hits PC. That should make quite a few people Pyst. It's the same style of game as *Myst*: a fantasy-themed, static screen, point-and-click first-person adventure with occasional FMV cut scenes. You can bet your life there will be oodles of puzzles to solve, and from the brief play test that we had it was apparent that the art and CG were of the highest quality. The game comes on five discs and is due for release next month.







RIVEN

SUPER MOTOCROSS (PS)

Acclaim's push into the sports market continues with a new motorcycle racer: *Super Motocross*. Featuring a variety of tracks and two-player split-screen action, this title (though early) looks like it may give *VMX Racing* and *Moto Racer* some serious competition.

ALSO IN DEVELOPMENT:

FORSAKEN (PS, N64)

See page 122 for a full preview of Probe's super slick '*Descent* on hover bikes' shooter.

WWF WARZONE (PS, N64)

See page 145 for a full preview of Acclaim's polygonal wrestler. Grrr.

SHADOW MAN (PS)

A veil of secrecy surrounds Acclaim's 'top secret' 3D action game though we do know it's a 3rd person action/adventure, said to be similar in style to *MDK*. More next month.

TUROK 2 (N64)

The bad boy with the loin cloth and particle weapons is back and to quote a source inside Iguana "They're doing things so unbelievable downstairs my jaw dropped to the floor!".



SUPER MOTOCROSS









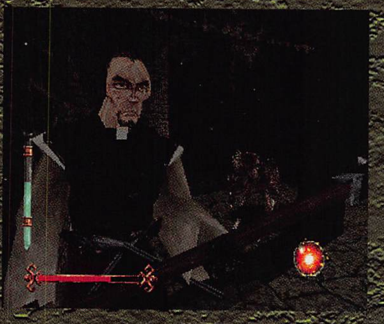


- ✦ The fastest killing machines in the world.
- ✦ 45 lethal missions.
- ✦ Huge 3-D worlds.
- ✦ Customizable weapons and armor.
- ✦ One- or two-player combat.
- ✦ It's enough to excite any would-be assassin.

Armored Core™

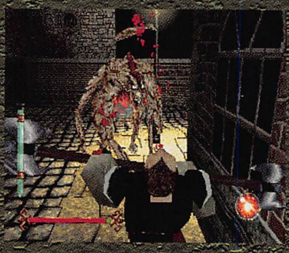
NIGHTMARE CREATURES

The cackling has ceased. The voices in my head have ceased their murmuring. I am now almost sane. It was touch and go for a minute there, though. You see, I've been locked in a cellar in the middle of Camden Town for two weeks hacking my way through Activision's finest PlayStation release in a very long time. I have emerged from an unbelievably ghastly tromp into Nineteenth Century London, a journey so monumentally intense that the plethora of heart-stopping scares will make you jump out of your skin. Not since the days of *Resident Evil* has gaming been so terrifyingly tense. When you sit down to play an extended session of *Nightmare Creatures*, you'll experience a multitude of emotions. First there'll be fear at the astoundingly well animated (not to mention supremely intelligent) monsters. There'll be anger when you'll be wrestling with the initially confusing control system. Then there'll be a manic cackle as you behead your first zombie. And this is just the start of hours upon hours of nail-bitingly tense wandering around a massive play area on a quest to find the insane master of an increasingly vicious shambling army of mutations. All must be squished into small fleshy pieces of sinew, gore and entrails. There's a reason why this game was released on Halloween; the carnage, brooding fear and thwarting of pure evil is on an unprecedented scale. Kalisto have succeeded in creating not only a damnably enjoyable video game, but a whole new genre! Behold the roaming beat-'em-up!



From the paper-shredding Kalisto logo onwards, you know immediately the labor and man hours that were poured into this title. A marvelous CG introduction shows a dark and foggy London town, zooming in on a madman at work in his inhuman laboratory. The hacking of limbs and twitching of corpses is but a prelude of the creations present in this game. A delightfully over-the-top narrator spins a fearful yarn about this hunched and pallid black magician. A air of brooding menace invades your senses. And next comes the title screen. A choice must be made of which character to play, and then, it's off into the darkness we go...





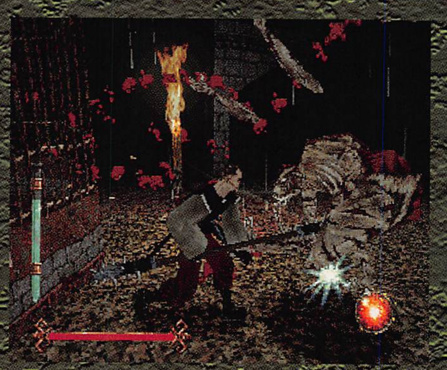
Once you emerge, you'll have the pleasure of removing the top half of a zombie from it's legs for the first time. This is where you'll need to get to grips with the control system

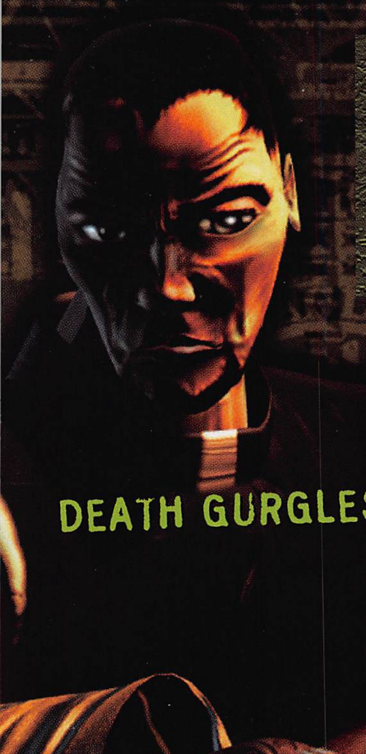


TENTACLED BEASTS WILL SHRED YOUR TENDONS TO PIECES!! TALONS WILL TEAR INTO YOUR DEFENSES! BE VIGILANT!















STAB HOWLING MUTATIONS WITH RUSTY BLADES!! DEATH GURGLES OF THE DEAD ECHO AROUND A DECAYING CAPITAL!!

of *Nightmare Creatures*. Some players may be initially wary of a control system with so many buttons, but relax; once you've mastered scrolling through your inventory (and remembered not to inadvertently fire of six pistol rounds at a wall by pressing the wrong shoulder button), the ease of controls becomes joyfully obvious. You'll learn to walk instead of run on occasion (particularly pleasurable should you be controlling the firm-buttocked Nadia), learn to swipe, kick and block, and begin to investigate that terrible and inhuman growling up ahead...

Combat is quick and deadly. You'll soon become competent in the disposing of a variety of lesser creatures, simply by waiting for them to charge, then side-stepping and slicing them into dog meat. Urgency is the order of the day however; you're infected with a deadly virus and the only way to halt it is to keep your adrenaline meter pumped. This keeps the action at an eye-popping, finger-twitchingly fast rate. You're constantly on the look out for fresh meat, for without another kill, you're liable to end up as one of Crowley's cronies...

As you progress through the game, you'll be struck by the fact that this is one polished graphics engine. We're talking up to five

Fighting Combos: Father Ignatius Blackward

Father Ignatius may be slightly slower than his female companion, but his combos are easier to pull off, they inflict a terrible amount of crushing damage, and there's more of them to learn. Ignatius also benefits from an increased constitution and a huge two-handed pointy stick. Let your religious fervor flow with this culler of abominations!

[], []	Double Kick
[], [], []	Triple Kick
X, X	Double Strike
X, X, X	Triple Strike
X, [], []	Hammer Curl
[], Triangle, X	Lunge Kick
[], X, X	Crescent Kick
X, X, X, []	Windmill Slam
[], X, []	Scottish Backhand
X, [], X, []	Spin Strike
[], Triangle	Ahab's Spear
[], X, [], X	Ahab's Revenge
[], Triangle, [], X	High Kick Feint
X, Triangle, O	Judas Jack Knife
X, [], O	Last Judgment
X, [], Triangle	Hammerhead Crush
RUN, X+[]	Armageddon Tactic
UP+X	Tornado Kick
UP+[]	Roundhouse Volley
Triangle, X	Flying Elbow Smash
Triangle, []	Flying Staff Strike
X, Triangle	360 Jam
DOWN, []	Back Strike

FATHER IGNATIUS BLACKWARD

Fighter Cleric dismembering for the Lord!

"Back into the foul pits of Hades! I'll crush your skulls like overripe melons!"





R REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - KALISTO

PUBLISHER - ACTIVISION

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

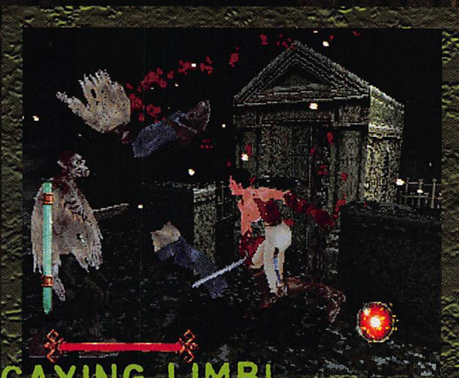
DIFFICULTY - PRETTY HAIRY

AVAILABLE - RIGHT NOW



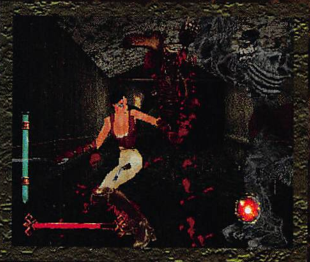
CHIEF HAMBLETON
Strike a light! What a ripper game!





CLEAVE THE SHAMBLING HORDES LIMB FROM DECAYING LIMB! MAD SLICING INFLICTS GRUESOME AMPUTATIONS!!





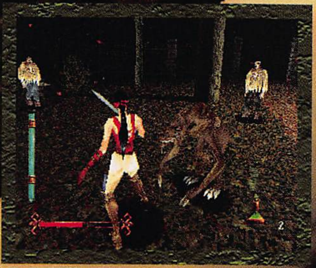
monsters on screen simultaneously with absolutely no slowdown, and a constant 25-30 fps action. Kalisto have cleverly eliminated (well, hidden would be more appropriate) any trace of the dreaded pop-up by staging the entire game at night, adding immeasurably to the fear you'll experience when negotiating the narrow winding cobbled streets of London. What all this adds up to is a roaming beat-'em-up melding the best portions of *Fighting Force* (constant enemy interaction) and *Resident Evil* (atmospheric undead culling). The actual levels are waded through, strangely enough, in a similar manner to *Doom*! You've a variety of switches to find which open doors, there's numerous secret areas where hordes of items are hidden. To some, the lack of puzzle elements may be a tad disappointing, but I relished the challenge of locating my next baying mutation and bearing down on them with my glaeming katana waving!

You'll also notice the detail in all the wall textures, wooden beams, boxes, crates, thicket bushes (which can be hacked through) and everything else. From the glow of the rusting Victorian lamp to the moulding shuttered window, every locale screams "meticulous detail!" at you. Kalisto wandered the streets of London themselves and the textures are modeled on existing buildings. All of this creates a convincing sensation of actually 'being there'. The pub signs are all different and creak in the breeze. Ghosts rise from their graves. Bats fly out of coffins. Fire flickers and conjures faces in the flames. You'll notice autumn leaves gently falling from the trees. There's rain which actually falls in droplets and splashes on the ground. The river water undulates, and walking through smoke and fog has never been more atmospheric. The only major shortfall are the fire effects; thrown down a torch and your enemy bursts into a human inferno, but with horrible pixelly flames. This does detract from your play, but is forgivable, especially when you finally view the astounding graphics of a burning Westminster through the stained glass windows on the penultimate level.

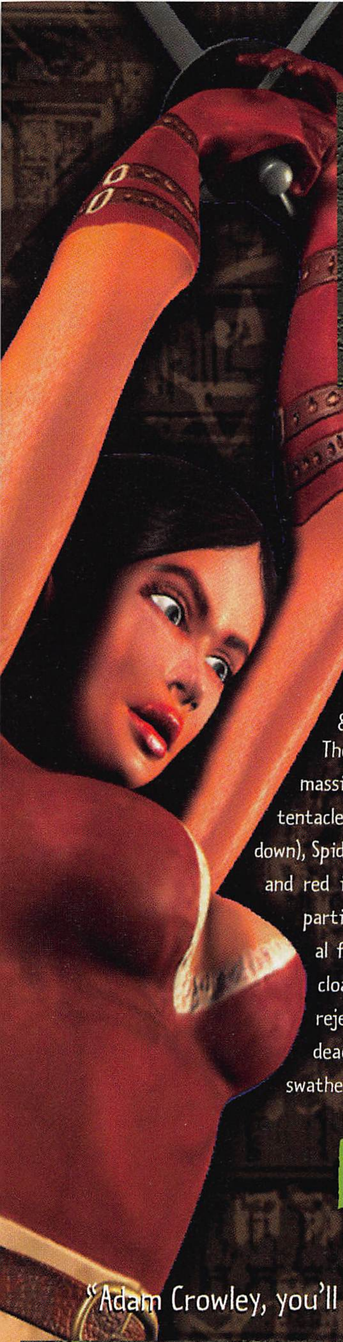
Once you become proficient at *Nightmare Creatures*, and as you reach the later levels, you'll then realize just how difficult this game is. In the early levels, there was a plentiful supply of caterwauling critters to cull, but about halfway through your trek you'll encounter less monsters, your adrenaline drops alarmingly quickly, and the fiends you do encounter are a lot more sturdy. This is where the final portion of the learning curve kicks in; combination attacks! The AI of the monsters is so intelligent that similar monsters learn your usual attacking patterns and begin to block them, thus making you learn new techniques. Believe me, the results of combo practice are worth it; hacking apart a Werewolf in five linked hits can bring a wry smile to even the most pacifist of gamers...

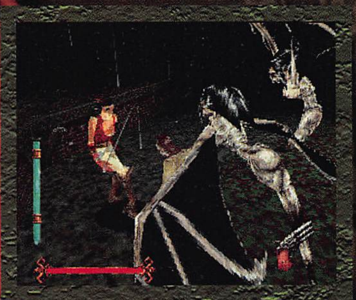
Of course, once one becomes proficient at all manner of combos, the fighting reaches new levels of intense amputative action! As mentioned in my preview, the sword-to-tentacle battles waged in this game are single most gory, humorous and downright stunning feature of the game. We're talking *Monty Python*esque "'Ere, yer arm's off!" "No it's not!" "Tis but a flesh wound!" fighting, with monstrous swines losing hands, feet, arms and even heads and still putting up their dukes! You'll gape in astonished amusement as arms fly off into the darkness accompanied by a splattering blood trail. Add to this a variety of foe-smashing items and you're in for one wild ride. I'm also pleased Activision noted some of my own suggestions and implemented into the game! For example, Dynamite blows appendages of



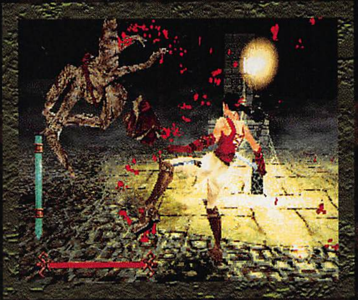








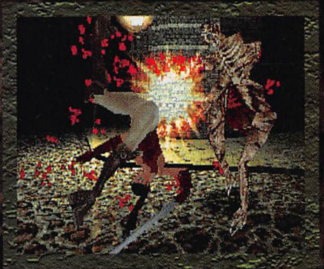




advancing beasties and a point-blank pistol shot decapitates zombies, ensuring even minor details leave you gawping at the horrific detail on show in this carnival of butchery...

Which brings me neatly onto the subject of the creatures themselves. Weighing in at over 400 polygons each, there's a baker's dozen of the most deviant twisted offspring ever to twitch their way into the streets of England's fair capital. This is a veritable rogue's gallery of the gibbering undead. Two different types of Zombie are you initial quarry (they come apart with ease after a particularly heavy overhead swing!), closely followed by the mainstay of any horror epic; the Werewolf. Try kicking this furry freak until he keels over. Next in the frothing mutation department is the Pepy's Monster, a thing with three heads, four arms and standing nine feet tall. A simple dodge and three hit hack tends to take down these aberrations. However, the annoyingly tough blue Docker (or Golem) appear next; a lumbering beast capable of squeezing your brain out through your ears. The fabled red golems that Kalisto constructed sadly didn't make it into the final game.

Then the array of anomalies continues with the Giant Insect (dodging these massive mosquitoes was never more fraught), the Thames' Monster (flapping tentacled deviant), Harpies (flying horrors that prove extremely difficult to slice down), Spiders, Giant Rats (which only appear on one level), Demonic imps (both gray and red in coloration), Hellhounds with a particularly nasty bite, and my personal favorite, the Faceless Men. These cloak and dagger Sherlock Holmes rejects sneak about with a swift and deadly stride; cut them down in swathes! Of course, there's the tougher



NADIA F. American fencer avenging her father's murder!

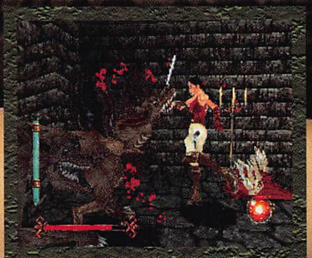
"Adam Crowley, you'll be eating your own innards for your inhumanity!"

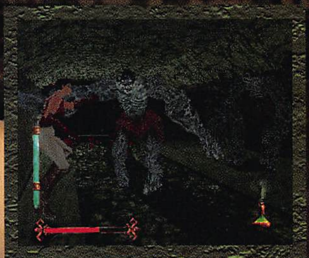
Fighting Combos: Nadia F.

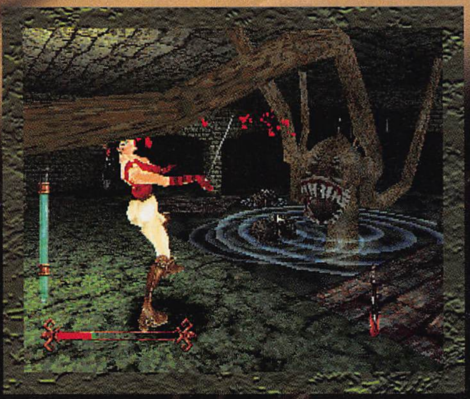
Extremely agile and lithe, in earlier versions of the game, Nadia was extremely proficient at cutting up her foes before bounding out of harm's way. Alas, she is now a mere shadow of her former self; her reach has been shortened, her combination attacks are more difficult to implement and she jumps a little less further than before. Still a polished fighter, but the Priest outranks her in terms of brute performance.

X, X	Double Kick
X, X, X	Triple Kick
[], []	Double Strike
[], [], []	Triple Strike
[], [], [], X, UP+X	Back Flip kick Combo
[], [], Triangle, X	Side Flip Kick
[], Triangle+O (Tap2X)	Gymnast Kick
[], X, X	Muscovian Boot Stomp
[], X, X, X	Feet of Fury
X, X, X, []	Cyclone Volley
X, X, DOWN+[]	Wuthering Slice
X, []	Whip Slash
X, [], UP+[]+X	Bloody Ballerina
X, UP+X	Gymnast Strike
X, UP+X, []+X	Divide & Conquer
UP+X	Whirling Dervish
UP+[]	Spin Blade
Triangle, X	Overhead Slam
Triangle, []	Flying Cross
DOWN, X	Back Kick













boss characters to meet, until you're finally granted an audience with your very worst nightmare. And the final confrontation with that winged monstrosity? Well, let's just say you'll be needing a new PlayStation pad and fingers after that fight....



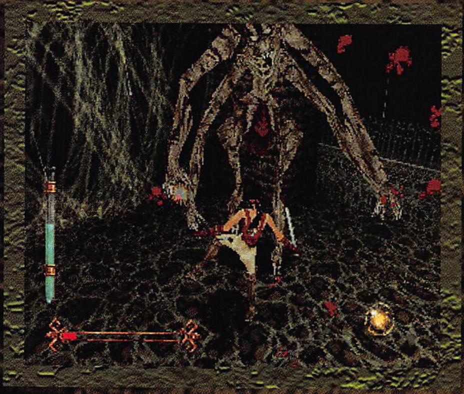


Not a spare meg of memory has been left on the CD; *Nightmare Creatures* is literally crammed to the rafters with 18 lengthy levels, and of course some of the best music ever heard in a video game. I'm serious when I say that the extra chill gained by listening to these ambiently sinister soundscapes adds to the immersion ten fold. You really are playing only half the game without sound. There's voices murmuring, wind blowing, spine-chilling organ chords and church bells chiming in the distance. When encountering the game's bosses however, the mood changes to full-on Heavy Metal guitar (with organ and howling beastie accompaniments), but still in keeping with the mood of the game. Hats off to the sound programmers; they really excelled here.

However before I depart into the night full of unadulterated praise, there are a few nightmarish discrepancies to deal with. Firstly, some may find the difficulty level a little high. At around level 12, you really start fearing for your life, and the game becomes quite scarily difficult from then on. Some may find that hacking apart any of the 13 foes tends to become a little tiresome after a while. I also hated those pixelly fire effects (mentioned earlier), but the main Hambleton bugbear roared into view when I tried to jump (specifically on water). The jumping system is extremely imprecise and clumsy, meaning you'll be battling through a level, take a running jump across a pier, and land slap bang in the middle of the Thames. And these heroes aren't the swimming kind. They're the drowning kind. There'll be a number of occasions like this (it's especially annoying when the camera pans around causing you to twitch and miss-time you jump), so be prepared to trek through some levels more than thrice.

However, these are minor points when you compare them to the overall package. Not only is this one of the most exciting adventures you'll ever undertake (you're plunged into madness with nothing but a sword to wave about), but it's also one of the most fun. Slicing and dicing foes in any other game doesn't come close to matching the offal flying, membrane slicing gore festival on show here. And of course, with a game of this caliber, there's always the multitude of secrets to discover. Among the extra special goodies on offer is the ability to become permanently enraged (hence the several gallons of hemoglobin splattered through this feature), a level select, invincibility and the fabled 'monster' code.

I wholeheartedly recommend *Nightmare Creatures*. Not only is it one of the most lavishly produced titles of the year, but it also contains the one vital ingredient essential to a video game; it is enthralling to play, dragging you into it's world and skewering you on a meathook until you'll pummeled every single creature of the darkness. Buy *Nightmare Creatures* immediately, turn off the lights, crank up the stereo and don't look over your shoulder... And now if you'll pardon me, I'm off to Highgate Cemetary to dispatch a howling demonic horde with an savage bloodlust and razor sharp staff....



Good Hunting!!

(Chief Hambleton swishes his cape and flits into the inky night)





A MONSTER-CULLING ARCHAIC INVENTORY!!

Once your creeping trek into adrenaline-soaked terror begins in earnest, you'll realize that there's more to this lark than running in, sidestepping a howling werewolf, hacking it's limbs off and retreating to cackle in delight. There's also a backpack full of items to collect; 19 to be exact. Some you'll find in breakable boxes and crates, while others can be grabbed from the still-twitching corpses of deviant entities you've just struck down. A good point to remember is to never use items you throw near to water (as the results are less than spectacular). Below is a list containing some helpful hints on the utilization of this array of archaic weaponry in the combat zone...

Mine - Small, green and spiky, these cause great amusement when critters shuffle onto them. Not as powerful as the Dynamite, the Mine is best used when you're coaxing an enemy forward or laying an ambush, especially as multiple mines can be laid simultaneously. Use on slow-moving critters only.

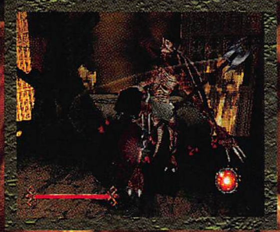
Repulsive Smoke - Fret ye not about an undead ambush; simply throw down a vial of ethereal mist, and watch your mutations stay their distance. There's no better way to fend off three creatures at once, and this wide circle of smoke allows you to hack away at your leisure.

Freeze Spell - All entities within sight are frozen into tiny shards of ice. There's nothing like the satisfaction of taking down four zombies in an explosion of liquid nitrogen. After the freezing process takes effect, the beasts can be shattered or left to detonate on their own.

Lightning Spell - Again, for those about to be overrun by howling beastlings, another way to halt their fervor is to blind them with a bolt from the blue. Be warned that this only lasts for ten seconds, so summon a bolt and hack immediately.

Chaos Spell - A glowing skull heralds one of Nightmare Creatures' most amusing items. Cast this and any monster suddenly receives an animosity brain impulse and lumbers over to attack his nearest brethren. Just sit back and watch the 'argument' take bloody effect. This even works on two of the same creature, but take care not to waste these precious items by casting them when you're facing only one brutish adversary.

Fire Bomb - Useful for the pyrotechnic lover, this creates a wall of advancing flame which sets any critter ablaze. Use with extreme caution; although you needn't strike the burning victim





TACKLE WINGED MUTATIONS WITH MANIC GLEE!! CARVE DEEP GOUGES INTO DEVIANT AND QUIVERING FOES!!






down (he eventually collapses in a gout of fire), shambling monsters set alight can set you ablaze with extreme ease.

Berzerker - The most fun you can have with your weapon, an inhuman forces grant you increased ardency and the ability to carve great chunks of gibbering flesh from your soon-to-be amputee. Find a well-populated area and dance the whirl of a dervish!!

Dynamite - Useful for ripping apart explosive barrels as well as advancing monsters. Watch out though; these beasts may lose an arm, but they'll still keep on coming!

Blast Gun - A huge arch of gunpowder and bullets tar apart monsters, striking down multiple foes. The Harpy's worst nightmare...

Hand Gun - A good way to take down the Thames' Monster, simply plant a bullet at this tentacled squid and watch the ensuing fireworks. Vital for blowing up barrels.

Orb - Either small and yellow or orange and big, these grant much-needed life-force to the character. Collect as many as you can in the first ten levels... you'll use every single one!

Beating Heart - Procure as soon as you see one, these endow the player with an extra life.

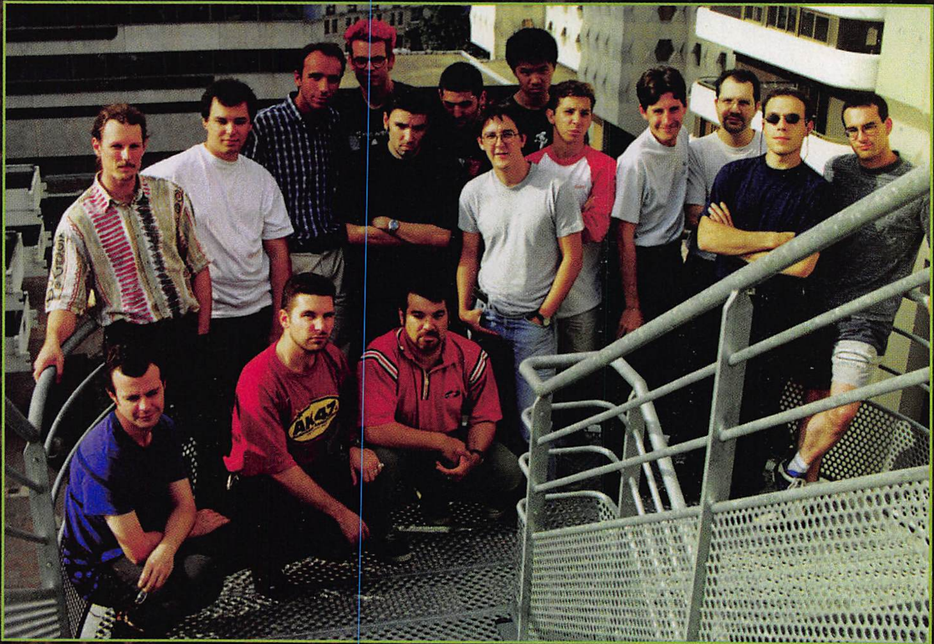
Weapon Upgrades - Both Ignatius and Nadia are able to dish much more damage later into the game after finding the three weapon upgrades cunningly scattered about the alleyways of London. The bigger the weapon, the more amputation and carnage caused!




Kalisto - Cal*lis*to [L. < Gr. Kallisto]

1. A nympth loved by Zeus and changed into a bear by Hera. 2. The fifth satellite of Jupiter. 3. A strange short-lived terrifying aberration [see: the Callisto effect]. 4. An insanely talented group of French programmers responsible for the seminal Nightmare Creatures.

Not only did Chief Hambleton visit jolly old London for a spot of ECTS watching, but he also trekked to Southwest France to interview some of the Kalisto team responsible for creating this masterpiece of gothic horror. In the next issue, GameFan will present a company profile of Kalisto (along with information on the forthcoming *Fifth Element* game), bit first, GameFan spoke at length with two of the team leaders on *Nightmare Creatures* in Kalisto's shiny new offices. What follows is a candid look behind the scenes at the making of this stunning trek into Ninteenth Century London... Let's go and meet Cyrille and Pascal, shall we?



The Nightmare Creatures team climb to the tallest building in Bordeaux to pose menacingly for this photograph. (Top row, left to right): Patrick Vauchez (Level Design), Cyrille Fontane (Game Manager), Eric Orgeron (PC version Programmer), Anthony Desmazean (Level Design), Pascal Barret (Lead Artist), Micheal Labat (Level Design), Sebastian Morin (Lead Programmer), Chong Yong (Animator), Benot Michorat (Animator), Eric Thommerot (Programmer), Thierry Ardiller (Level Design), Alain Guyet (Lead Programmer), Jean Philippe Savariault (Additional Animation). (Bottom Row, crouching, left to right): Michel Coulie (Level Design and Textures), Olivier Bailly Maitre (FMV Post Production) and Philippe "Chico" Courdille (additional Graphics).

GF: This is an interview with Cyrille Fontane (Game Manager) and Pascal Barret (Lead Artist). Tell me first how long *Nightmare Creatures* has been in development.

PB: Two years.

GF: How many members of the team are there?

PB: About twelve people.

GF: Are you happy with the finished product?

CF: Yeah.

PB: Very happy.

GF: Is this the first big project you've had? What other games have you worked on?

PB: For me, it's the first game. I worked on French comics before.

CF: This is my seventh game. But I've never done anything this big before.

GF: Where did you draw inspiration from?

PB: Inspiration comes from horror films. I'm a big fan of the *Evil Dead* and Sam Raimi, and also Tim Burton.

GF: How did you set out to make this game sort of different from other games, like *Tomb Raider* for example?

CF: In the beginning, we wanted to make a game that would make American players feel some fear. That's what we wanted.

PB: Something that was creepy and gory. With a lot of monsters.

CF: In the beginning we didn't want it to be that gory...

PB: ...but we couldn't prevent it from being a bit bloody. It came by itself. You know, nobody stopped us, everybody wants more blood, more blood! But we don't make blood for the sake of blood.

GF So you mean that the blood's only present when you're cutting apart zombies, and you've got to be cutting the zombies apart or otherwise you die?

PF: Yeah. It's not like *Mortal Kombat*..

GF: How do you rate the other games that are perhaps in this genre, like *Tomb Raider*?

PB: I don't like it that much. To be honest, I'm not fond of this type of game, it's a little too like *Prince of Persia*. I prefer action games. *Tomb Raider* is a very good discovery game, but it's too slow.

CF: But there's no doubt that it's a great product.

GF: How did you go about creating the atmosphere of *Nightmare Creatures*? What sort of references did you use?

PB: We used all kinds of references. We looked at everything... books...

GF: And you went to London to look at some of the actual locales. Did you look at actual streets?

PB: Yeah, and some buildings that we could use for the actual environments. But most of the buildings from the period we were dealing with are no longer there.

GF: There's always Highgate Cemetary (a location in the game). Did you go there?

CF: Yeah!

PB: And we took a lot of pictures.

GF: And the actual maps in the game, they did exist in the Ninteenth Century? Are they actual maps or are they pieced together?

PB: We wanted the game to be realistic, but the priority was to have good gameplay. So the way the streets cross themselves, the one ways and stuff like that are there to serve the gameplay, not to be realistic.

GF: How many polygons are the characters composed of?

PB: About 450, with the main characters, Nadia and Ignatius at about 600.

GF: How did you come up with the concept and the story?

CF: We first made the game and then thought up the story! [laughs]. We have somebody on the team that was willing to write this stuff and he really wanted to make the story behind the game. But we wanted first to have a game! We

had a game design, you know, just a moving background and a character on it, but there was no gameplay. So we wanted to focus on the game and then find the story. And from the background that he created, we matched the final game.

GF: Is Adam Crowley an ancestor of the actual Aleister Crowley?

CF: Everyone can think what they want...

GF: It's nice that you can see him at the end of levels darting off to keep you on your toes. How did you come up with the idea of the adrenaline meter?

CF: The gameplay made us... We had to change the attitude of the player from "I'll avoid all the monsters to get to the end," to something like "I have to fight the monsters to get to the end."

GF: I wanted to talk about the music because it's stunning; some of the best I've personally heard on the PlayStation.

CF: Hallelujah! Somebody liked it! [laughter]

GF: How did the musician (Hambleton note: the mysterious musician, a gentleman named Frederick Motte, managed to evade the Hambleton camera) go about making the music? How much input did you have? What sort of effect were you hoping for?

PB: We've known him for a long time, so we know he's talented, we know we can trust him. And um, we just wanted to make something that was like movie music. So we just asked to have some atmospheric music. So if a monster just pops into a scene, we can make him roar very loud, and the music won't detract from that.

GF: So the sound effects aren't lost in the background music?

PB: Yeah. And uh, so that you can hear things like the torch burning. And that is contrasted when you fight a boss, because there we have heavy metal. Because it is fun, the heavy metal!

CF: A lot of people on the team like it.

PB: People do their best when they do what they like.

GF: Was it easy to have the zombies' bits and pieces come off? Like the arms and the legs. How easy was that to program?

PB: Oh. I don't think that it was very hard for them. The programmer really wanted to do that and it was not impossible. But they really wanted to make it, so they spent a night on it, and when we came back in the morning...

GF: The programmer was hacking limbs off?

PB: [laughs] Yeah. So we had to put the item in the game that let you chop everything up!

GF: Whose idea was it to use a combo system?

CF: That was kind of a complex thing. In the middle of the game, we had a problem; we couldn't do what we wanted to do. We wanted to have very good gameplay, that was our main focus, and we didn't succeed. It was a failure. The game wasn't very fun to play and we were very disappointed. So we went through a whole set of ways to make the fighting intense. So we just played the games that we liked to play, um... *Tekken* and *Toshinden*, with very good combos, you know, those kind of games.

GF: And *Soul Blade*?

CF: It wasn't out at that time, but it's definitely one of the best fighting games.

GF: Are you a Namco fan?

CF: Oh yes. I just received *Time Crisis*.

GF: Was there anything in the game that you had to leave out, or something that you would have liked to have kept in the game that you couldn't? Either because of time or memory constraints...

PB: The main concern was not memory. Mostly it was time. We wanted more different monsters and more interaction with the background...

CF: More animation.

PB: Yeah, and more specific animation. And we only have a few doors opening in each level, and we would have liked to have every door opening and every window to be able to be broken. But our production time didn't allow it.

GF: So you're definitely working on *Nightmare Creatures 2*?

PB: Yeah!

CF: Yeah!

PB: It's not the same game. It's not *Tomb Raider 2*.

CF: We don't just redo some stuff and add some features, we'll make a brand new game. We started two years ago and the technical features of the game are better now. We want to make some very new stuff and I think we have some good ideas. We haven't designed anything at this point, but we know what kind of gameplay we want.

GF: What was it like working with Sony? How were they? Were they helpful?

PB: Yeah, a great help. They're very efficient about the debugging. We couldn't have done it on our own. They have a building where the testers are, and they spend all day debugging stuff and I just received a debugging report today and they tried everything. They found about 800 things wrong!!

GF: 800?! So you're working on all of those...

CF: We've got 66 to go.

GF: What developers do you most admire at the moment, or what are your favorite games at the moment?

PB: My favorite games are *Formula 1* and *Crash*



Under Hambleton interrogation; Cyrille Fontane (Game Manager) and Pascal Barret (Lead Artist)

Bandicoot. I also really like *Resident Evil*. And I'm quite fond of *Wipeout XL*, because of the swaying feeling it creates..

GF: How do you rate the big three software companies-Sega, Sony, and Nintendo?

PB: Sony is really good. They could sell my mother! They can sell anything. And they make huge money with games that are really interesting. They can't make a crap console and crap games. They're really good. As for Sega, I was a Sega fan, and I'm still. I'm still hoping that they'll be able to do something...

GF: And Nintendo?

PB: Ah, Nintendo. I just wonder how those guys can make such a nasty mistake and still be alive (Pascal is talking about the CD format and various huge fees and production costs required). But their console is good; we just have no incentive to make a game for that system.

GF: It's very difficult to make money on the...

PB: On the N64, yes. Because we have to buy many Silicon Graphics workstations... well, until the PC board arrives!

CF: [Yawning]

(Laughter)

GF: you look like you guys need some rest. Thanks very much for speaking to me..

PB: Thank you.

CF: Thank you.

We'll be back next month, hopefully with a look at Kalisto's past and future, including an interview with the founder of the company, Nicolas Gaume, and as much information on the *Fifth Element* (which uses an enhanced version of the *Nightmare Creatures* game engine).as we can possibly cram in. Until then...

Chief Hambleton would like to thank Nicolas Gaume (CEO, Kalisto), Cyrille, Pascal, and everyone on the *Nightmare Creatures* team for their help and support.

Je vous remerci beaucoups et je vous envoyent mes meilleurs souhaites!















New and improved for '98, Jet Moto 2 packs a king size wallop!



It's funny, on the very day Nintendo showed up for a two day stint with the whimsically wonderful and forever fruitacious *DKR*, Sony, as if they somehow knew, dropped 2 versions of *Jet Moto 2* into our outstretched hands—one for our PS mag *Station* and one for GF. So as Nintendo fired up the good fun just feet away, me and few of my cohorts dove head first into the devil's game, a racer so brutal at times that you'll wonder why you ever signed up in the first place: *Jet Moto 2*.

After a quick look at the teams and their specific traits, as it was in the original and is even more so now, it's time to find which pilot fits your particular style best. You have to live with your chosen mount through the wide open insanity as well as the tight stuff (and don't forget the super hairy stunt stuff) so finding a proper balance is essential. From there, 10 meaty stages await, each packed with horrific obstacles and tight grooves that will take more than a few laps to master. You can set the number of laps (up to 6) so whether you're a slow starter or a flash in the pan, you get a fighting chance















Girls! Girls! Girls! JM2 is packed with curvy racers. A kiss before you die?









against the fierce CPU opposition.

The original *JM* required sporadic grappling—in most cases for speed rather than survival. In *JM2* grappling plays a major roll, especially around some of the more insane courses like the shaft, a dehumanizing underground pipe of death where one false move sends you plummeting into the blackness. If you ignore the energy poles you will surely leave the race... flying and screaming. If you're getting the feeling that *JM2* is a hard game, well, let's just say you're going to spend a lot of time in the practice mode, even if you possess super skills. This dose of the *Jet Moto* is highly obstacle-based, so you must mix speed with memorization, timing, and strategy. Yeah, it's tough. Money well spent, this is.

With no segue whatsoever then, let's tackle the audio. The music is a blend of thick futuristic and rock-hard rock that fits the action all too well, and the sound effects, as they did in the first, thump mightily, providing the audio kick that should accompany such a joyously torturous game.

After the dust settles, as I sit with Vampeera (I'm gonna score) looking out over the shimmering evening glass I can only say that *Jet Moto 2* is everything a good sequel should be, and more. In a world full of "me too" racers it, definitely stands out as the one to buy. ***ES***









R REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - SINGLETRAC

PUBLISHER - SONY

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED

AVAILABLE - OCTOBER



E_STORM
Ain't nuthin' cute about it. JM2 will eat you alive.

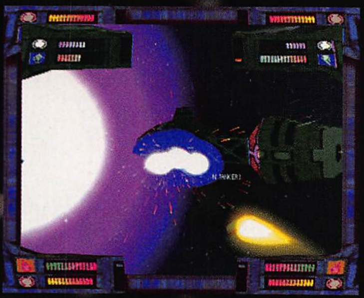
What do I think of when I hear the name Psygnosis? Beautiful graphics, a fantastic soundtrack, rockin' gameplay... and most importantly, eyesful of lens flare. And on the negative side, not too great longevity. So, keeping this list of standard Psygnosis operating procedures in mind, let's take a look at one of their latest, and possibly best, efforts: *Colony Wars*.

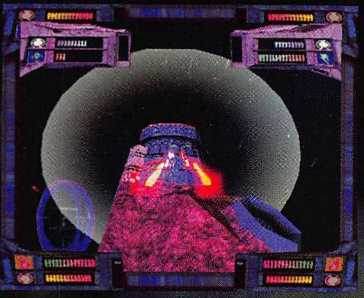
Colony Wars is cut from the same mold as the PC classic *Wing Commander* (which hasn't made much of an impact on the PS). It's a fully-3D space combat 'sim' with the emphasis on fast, pantaloon-soiling (patent pending Chief Hambleton) action. There are thirty missions to battle through and depending on how you do in each mission, the story branches accordingly. So, you could conceivably lose a couple of missions in a row and the story would still continue, albeit not so well for the good guys (you would never let it come to that though, right?).

The story is typical good vs. evil fare, with the standard cliché-ridden 'galaxy's life hanging in the balance' plot, I'm afraid. And while this can be good in other games (e.g. *WC*) it doesn't add anything to *CW*; this is more than likely the weakest part of the game. Whereas in *WC* you play an active role in the unfolding storyline, in *CW* you have no real control beyond how well you do in each mission. This has the effect of disconnecting you from the story, and ultimately reduces the game to a more bare bones style shooter. Thankfully, in this department, *CW* excels like no other.

To say that the graphics in this game are good, would be an understatement on par with 'E. Storm kinda' likes platform games'—they are mind-meltingly hot! Super smooth 60 fps action, eye-bleedingly wicked lighting, lens flare from the gods, all wrapped up in some of the hottest CG intermission sequences on the PS. If there ever was an overall graphical showpiece for the PS, this is it. It takes the phrase 'tour-de-force' to a new level. Psygnosis has indeed mastered the PS hardware.

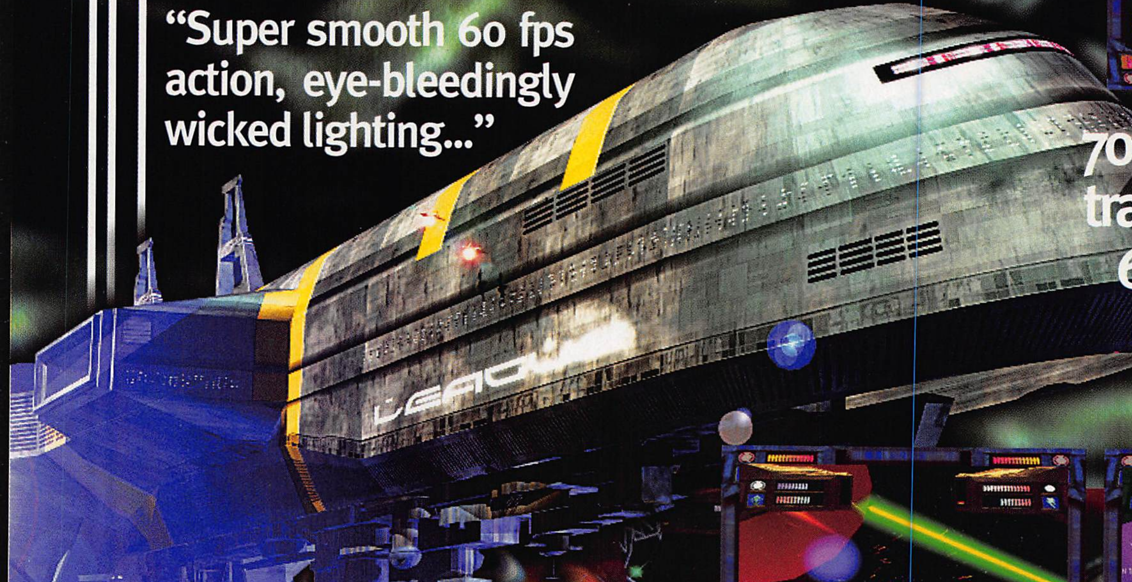
The music was crafted in the style of John Williams (of *Star Wars* and the *Indiana Jones* series fame) with a very nicely composed cinematic score that gets your blood pumping and keeps pace with the tempo of the mission—fast for intense dogfights,







"Super smooth 60 fps action, eye-bleedingly wicked lighting..."



70 full missions, 6 training missions, 6 endings and 6 different spacecraft to fly!



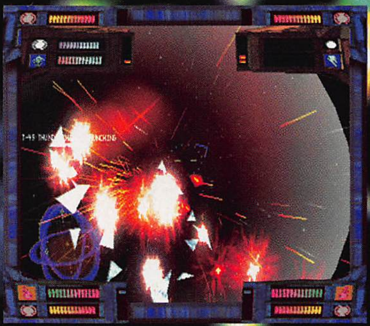


COLONY WARS

and more laid back for the escort-style portions. The sound effects also convey the intensity of the combat with terrific bass response and cool laser-sounding effects for a lot of the weapons. This game's aural assault is a perfect complement for the blazingly rich visuals. Psygnosis even hired a James Earl Jones sound-alike to handle the narration. And of course, it's all in Surround Sound (you do have a setup, right?).

This of course brings all you would-be star fighters to the $64,000 question: Is it fun, and is it varied enough to play through all thirty missions? Well, there's no question as to whether this game is fun; heck, the graphics alone make it fun. Just make sure you only play it 5-10 missions at a time, that way you won't burn out on it too fast. The problem here is that all the missions, despite different objectives, have the same basic feel. While this isn't necessarily a bad thing, it does make the game somewhat repetitive in the long run.

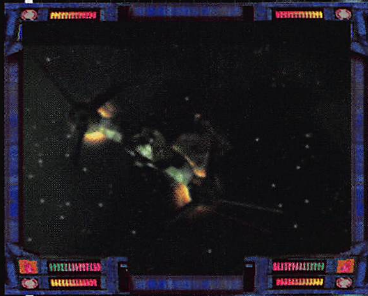
If only Psygnosis had mimicked WC's story sequences, this game would have been the pinnacle of the genre on any platform—console or PC. As it stands, it's a ragingly intense arcade shooter and that's about it. Not that I'm one to look down on a hot shooter, it's just that this type of game



needs a little more meat to hold everything together. Still, despite these few flaws I'd still say that Colony Wars is worth the price of admission, if only just to see the game in motion. My eyes still ache from the spectacle of it all. ***ECM***











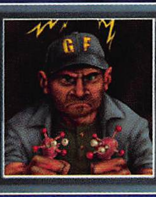
"...a fully 3D space combat 'sim' with the emphasis on fast, pantaloon soiling (patent pending Chief Hambleton) action."





REVIEW | PlayStation

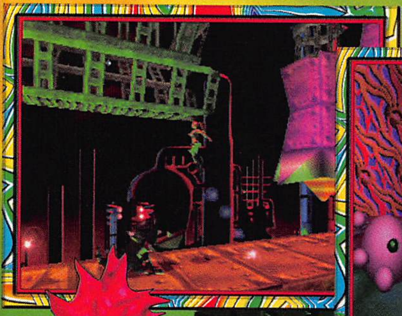
DEVELOPER - PSYGNOSIS
PUBLISHER - PSYGNOSIS
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - WINTER



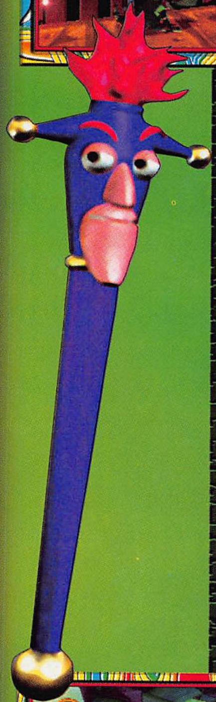
ECM
"Oh my God, it's full of stars..."




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For PlayStation and Sega Saturn.
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Excellent, we have sequels galore in this issue! The one you're looking at, Crystal Dynamics' *Pandemonium 2*, might be one of the best platformers you'll play this year. With an insanely eclectic fusion of gameplay engines, stunning graphics, and hyper-original level design, *P2* is a real shocker. Honestly, I've played every version of this game over the course of its development, and it's amazing how well it finally came together (unlike certain *other* titles). Just brings a smile to my cyber-mug! Read on for the scoop...

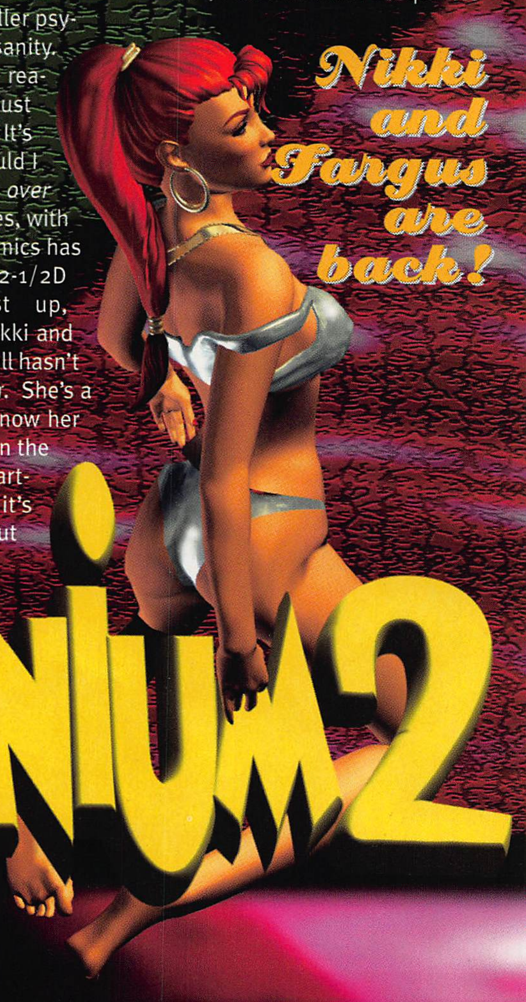
The story this time around has Nikki and Fargus adventuring the land together. The luscious Nikki has amassed quite the ego ("I am ultra-vixen incarnate!"), while Fargus has gone completely, wholesomely loony. Joining the pair is Fargus' smart-ass boomerang, Sid, a sentient loud mouth who wants nothing more than to mount his owner's head somewhere. They've been following a magical comet, The Comet of Infinite Possibilities, through the night skies for days. They also intend to be on hand, personally, when the comet touches down...for a little wish or two.

Pandemonium 2 is unique for two big reasons: a) It's a trip. Really, this sucker's long. The levels are just *huge*. And b) It's a trip. *P2* is psychedelic mania from one end to the other! Addressing the first point, I'd have to say that this is one of the best-designed 2D platformers I've played on the PS. The 19 total levels sometimes have up to six completely unique sections, every one of 'em bursting at the seams with secrets, treasure, and mad platforming. And as for b), well, the levels, enemies, and graphics become more and more bizarre and colorful the deeper you get into the game. Just check out "Lick the Toad", *Pandemonium 2*'s quintessential trippy level, for killer psychotropic platforming insanity.






'Course, there's better reasons to play *P2* than just length and great visuals! It's called gameplay. Or should I say *massively improved over the original* gameplay. Yes, with this sequel, Crystal Dynamics has practically re-invented 2-1/2D play-mechanics. First up, there's the characters, Nikki and Fargus. The red bombshell hasn't changed much since the first game, but she sure feels better. She's a little faster, a whole lot more maneuverable in the air, and now her patented double-jump is twice as easy to release. Fargus, on the other hand, is a whole new man. He still has his standard cartwheel roll, although now it's faster and a little tighter, but



Nikki and Fargus are back!

Pandemonium 2







it's when Sid comes into play that things get really interesting. After launching the little NYC cabbie-voiced freak, you can totally control his flight path through the air. So Nikki double-jumps to get hard to reach coins and items, and Fargus sends his staff in to do the collecting. They can also grab onto edges and lift themselves up; Nikki handstands up to her feet Lara Croft-style, while Fargus digs-in with Sid and hops over the edge. And finally, our two heroes make good use of fire and lightning power-ups. With fire, Nikki can shoot fireballs at multiple angles (great for single hits on mad-dogs, fish-men, and the "doh" boys), and our resident psycho, Fargus, becomes engulfed in flames and runs around invincible and outta' control. Lightning uses an electrical wave to expand the bad guys 'til they *pop!* Yes...all this, *and* good control!

BOARDER RUN!



Let's go through some specific level play mechanics now. Some areas are based entirely on going back and forth, triggering switches that set into motion certain platforms, doors, etc. These areas, as well as all areas in *Pandemonium 2*, are supported by a hyper intelligent camera system. If you trip something, the camera will zoom in to show exactly what's happening. And oft-times, when crossing rope hand over hand for example, the polygonal scenery will be swept into an awesome tilted camera view so you can see everything above or beneath you. The programmers also did a fantastic job directing the Mech stage, where you control a giant laser-blasting 'bot through side-scrolling and first-person environs. It must've been a hellish chore to get all the camera angles sorted in this frenzied scenario, yet they've done it amazingly well. It's also a cool section, by the way. Just like so many others, you're simply not expecting half the stuff they throw at you...levels, bosses, graphics, you name it...and I *dig* that about this game!

A few quick details, before I'm done here. The bonus stage (beat a level with 80% treasure and you're in), called "Border Run", is cool but tough. We're talking *Battletoads*-type speed and memorization, except that you've only three chances to beat it, doh! And I know I've said it before, but *P2*'s layout, size, and speed just rock. Seriously, this engine is a piece of work. Nice spot effects too, great textures, and some gorgeous lighting. I like the music...or should I say I've *grown* to like it. Crystal Dynamics calls it Techno-licious Drum-tastic Super-Jungle Bass, or something to that effect, but I call it good stuff. Really good for midi tunes, especially.

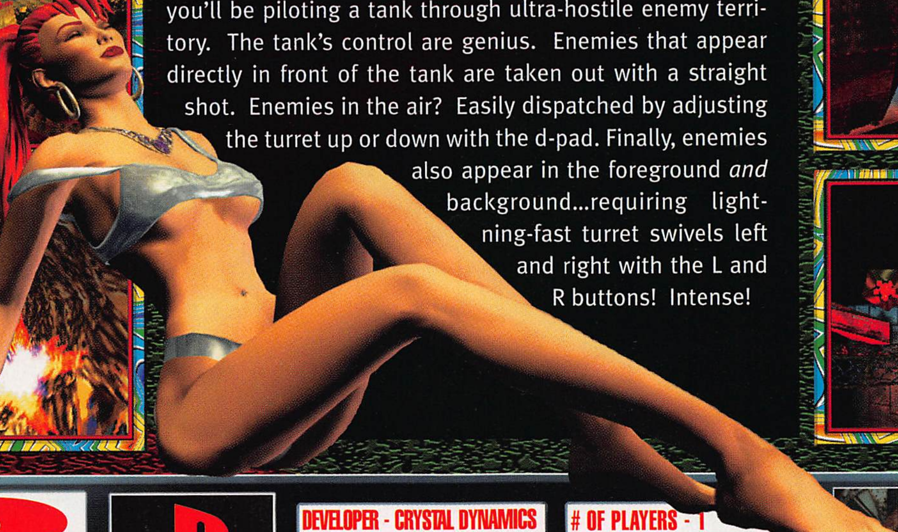
That's all folks! Buy *Pandemonium 2* if you want a solid platformer with staying power (I'm going back for 100% treasure on every level!). It's also very easy on the eyes, genuinely funny at times, and ultra-playable. *G*





HATE TANK!

In one of the coolest levels in the game, "Hate Tank", you'll be piloting a tank through ultra-hostile enemy territory. The tank's control are genius. Enemies that appear directly in front of the tank are taken out with a straight shot. Enemies in the air? Easily dispatched by adjusting the turret up or down with the d-pad. Finally, enemies also appear in the foreground *and* background...requiring lightning-fast turret swivels left and right with the L and R buttons! Intense!







R REVIEW | PlayStation

DEVELOPER - CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
PUBLISHER - MIDWAY
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER



GLITCH
Surprise! One of the best games this month!






FORMULA 1 Championship Edition

PSYGNOSIS AND BIZARRE CREATIONS DO IT AGAIN!

Last year about this time, Psygnosis shocked racing fans when they released Bizarre Creations' incredible Formula One, the most realistic Formula racer ever, and copies flew off the shelves into the PlayStations of Indy fans the world 'round. In the year since, it's become one of the top selling PS games (no mean feat considering the caliber of the competition). But you know what? Bizarre wasn't quite satisfied with their remarkable creation, and so this year we find ourselves with yet another Formula One title from them, Formula One: Championship Edition, seeking to not only update and improve, but also to give racers a new experience. And have they succeeded? Well, now...

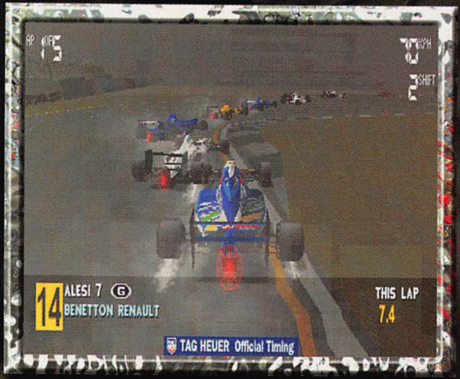
There's so many new features it's impossible to list in this one page, so let's hit the big points: Graphically, this is a major leap from the first. As an example, the cars are now made up of around 1200 polygons, as opposed to last year's approximately 700. Draw-in is now handled by a dynamic system (which seems to lessen the draw-in on the track, while increasing it trackside), although you can choose "locked" draw-in in the options. And to top off the visual feast, the whole game runs in high-res! (ECM's favorite feature, I might add, is the ability to turn off the lens flare! "Yeah, it's cool, but it's in every-thing now!") The resulting frame rate with all of this going on is good, if a bit jerky, at times.




Also greatly improved is the incredible AI. Remember how Formula One's opponents never made a mistake? Perfect drivers, all of them! Well, now they not only make errors now and then (brake timing, under-steering, etc.), but there's a random factor thrown into the mix to add to the realism. Keep in mind, though, now that they do make mistakes, they've been made slightly faster to compensate (or maybe it just seems that way)! They'll be quick to take advantage of your mistakes, as well, and believe me, you'll make more than a few, getting used to the more advanced handling, especially with an analog controller. This game controls more realistically than ever, with a resulting increase in difficulty. Prepare for a long haul to beat this baby at professional levels... Arcade Mode is even more "arcade" than before, but the sight of a Formula car doing power-slides is, how should I say, unsettling... Good fun, though.

No more Vai or Satriani in this one, but the cinematic/guitar rock tunes are a damned good substitute. Those that prefer Murray Walker to the tunes are in for a treat. You can now set his commentary to one of three varying levels, from just times and race order to the full-on commentary, with the able assistance of Martin Brundle ("You got that right, Murray!").

So how does all this add up? Well, it all boils down to this: If you're a die-hard realism freak, you'll love this. But if you put the "fun" factor at the top of your priorities list, you're better off with last year's Formula One. In my humble opinion, F1:CE finishes just behind F1, but not by much, and remains a phenomenal game. Now, if only I could beat Alesi in the rain... *R*





R REVIEW

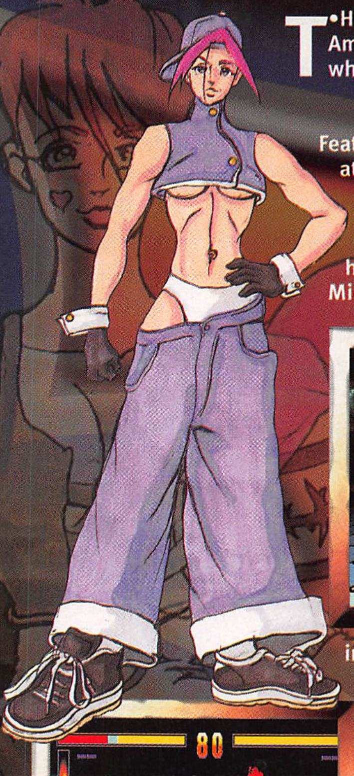
PlayStation

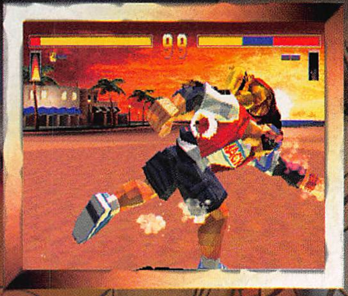
DEVELOPER - BIZARRE CREATIONS	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2 (SPLIT)
PUBLISHER - PSYGNOSIS	DIFFICULTY - INT.-ADVANCED
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOW



REUBUS
If I could only beat Alesi in the rain...

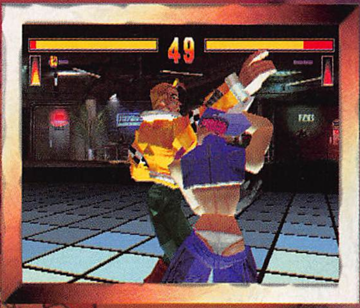

HOW DID CROC FIND HIS COMPETITION?





T•HQ recently brought the hot anime license, *Ghost in the Shell*, to American shores. To further their rebirth of sorts, I anxiously waited to see what they might do next. The answer: *Vs.* by Polygon Magic.

T•HQ and Polygon Magic have co-created a fighting game based on teens from the LA area... well, LA's lost children maybe. Featuring a band of street gangs all decked out in baggy and or sporty attire, fighters take to the playgrounds, beaches, and subway stations to show off their stylin' threads and martial arts expertise. Sure, they're a band of misfits and mutants, but hey, who wants to see a bunch of straight kids kick the crap out of each other. There's Vikram, the first human with a zipper stitched down the middle of his head (uh, yeah); Mineo, the first mime (yes, you read that correctly) to make an appearance







in a fighting game; and last, but certainly not least, a pimp by the name of Slim Daddy (pause for side-splitting, gut wrenching laughter). Although any one of these freaks would fit right in in Southern California, do I want them in my video games?



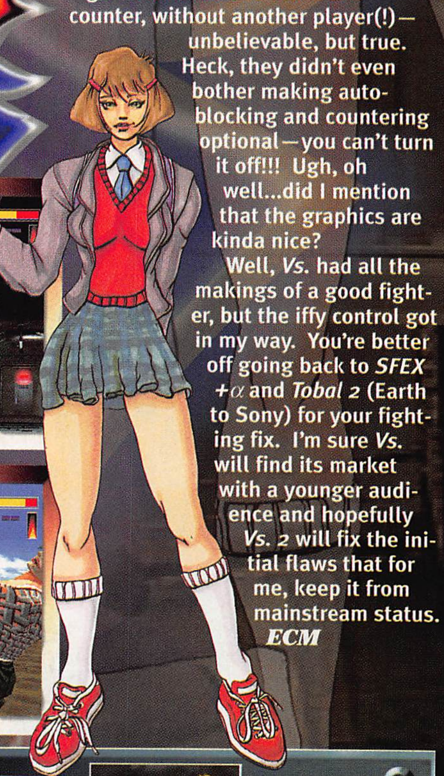
Ah, but from the moment the intro comes up, it's apparent that Polygon Magic has definite power in the graphics department. Featuring swift 60 fps fighting and detailed texture mapped characters, it's certainly impressive. The characters themselves look solid even if the designs are cheesy, with hot motion capture and blazing lighting effects. The stages range from a subway station (straight out of *VF3*) to Venice Beach (which all these characters probably call home). Most backgrounds feature some nice details, such as the construction sight with sparks raining down (a la *VF3*) and the playground with fighter craft landing and taking off overhead; very cool. The only downside to the graphics would be the lack of gouraud shading on most of the characters, giving them a very blocky, lego-like appearance. Strangely though, all the female characters' bare legs are gouraud shaded and look **very** smooth—hmmm, then again, maybe it's not *that* strange. The music is pretty rockin' as well if you're into the whole alternative (complaint) rock deal.

The big question, though, is whether the gameplay can live up to the graphics and, well, it doesn't quite make it. It seems that they were aiming for a *VF*-style setup with a punch, kick, punch+kick and evade button. The evade button lets you dodge left and right, although it's nowhere near as useful as it is in *VF3*. You can use it to escape from throws and the like, but that's about it. The big problem, however, is that the controls feel very chunky, and more often than not I could take opponents down simply by going into a spastic, saliva-spraying seizure and mashin' the heck out of the buttons—not the best compliment to pay a fighting game (and all that spit isn't the most pleasant sight either). Oh, and lest I forget, there is no actual jumping in this game—NONE at all. The only time you leave the ground is when you are in the midst of one of those button-bashing binges, and your character may jump a little for some extra hits.



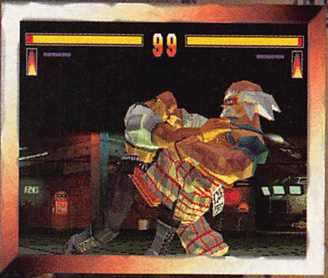
Oh, and special mention goes to whomever came up with the idea of having auto-blocking on all the time! Yes, now you too can play a 2-player game and marvel as the game continues to block and counter, without another player(!)—unbelievable, but true. Heck, they didn't even bother making auto-blocking and countering optional—you can't turn it off!!! Ugh, oh well...did I mention that the graphics are kinda nice?

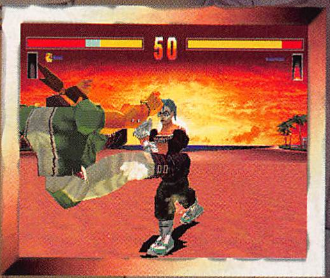




Well, *Vs.* had all the makings of a good fighter, but the iffy control got in my way. You're better off going back to ***SFEX +α*** and *Tobal 2* (Earth to Sony) for your fighting fix. I'm sure *Vs.* will find its market with a younger audience and hopefully *Vs. 2* will fix the initial flaws that for me, keep it from mainstream status.

ECM







R REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - POLYGON MAGIC	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - T•HQ	DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOW



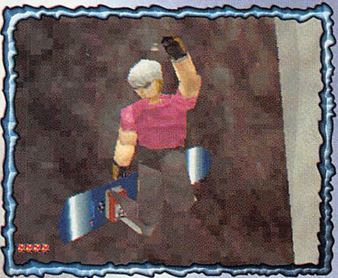
ECM
Move over, *Fighting Vipers*, now there's something stranger.











UEP Systems is back, with the sequel to one of my five favorite games last year on the PlayStation. *CoolBoarders 2* is an upgrade and then some. *CB1* was one player; *CB2* is two. The first had four courses, and a bonus course. *CB2* has ten normal courses, three big air tracks, a big air "master" course, and a halfpipe; then just for good measure they throw in a board park, where 'boarders can practice to their heart's content. That's 16 different courses, in all. Whew!

Then there's the characters, increasing in number to

BIGGER, BADDER, AND NASTIER THAN EVER... COOLBOARDERS IS BACK





four, plus at least three hidden characters (*CB1* had 2, and the hidden SnowMan). Manage to get a few trophies as you practice the main courses, and you'll be rewarded with extra boards (I've gotten three thus far, but I hope there's more!). Or, if you're not satisfied with their designs (which would surprise me, as they've got Burton's boards everywhere...), you can create your own design, or modify one of the pre-existing patterns.

Well, you say. Lots of goodies. Cool. But how does it play? Ahhh, I was hoping you'd ask that: At first play, it seems only slightly improved from *CB1*, but after a few

COOLBOARDERS 2

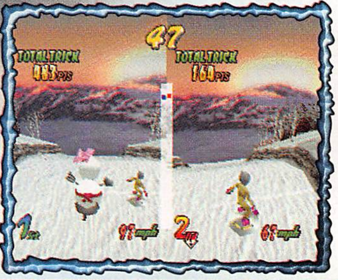
attempts at winning the championship (while seven other competitors do their damnedest to pound you into the snow), you'll be sure you've come a long way from *CB1*. Then race a friend in one of the two-player modes, and *CB2* really begins to shine.





Feelin' cocky? Then head on into the "big air master" mode, and see how long you can last performing all number of tricks, spins, grabs, combos, etc. at the whim of the computer! Not easy, but totally awesome!

So, though the graphics are pretty much the same (albeit more of them), and the soundtrack's gone way south (strange stuff, not my thing) from the twang of last year's model, *CB2* is nonetheless a far superior game in every other respect. If you liked *CoolBoarders*, you'll love *Coolboarders 2*. If you didn't, well, give it a shot, you might be surprised... **R**



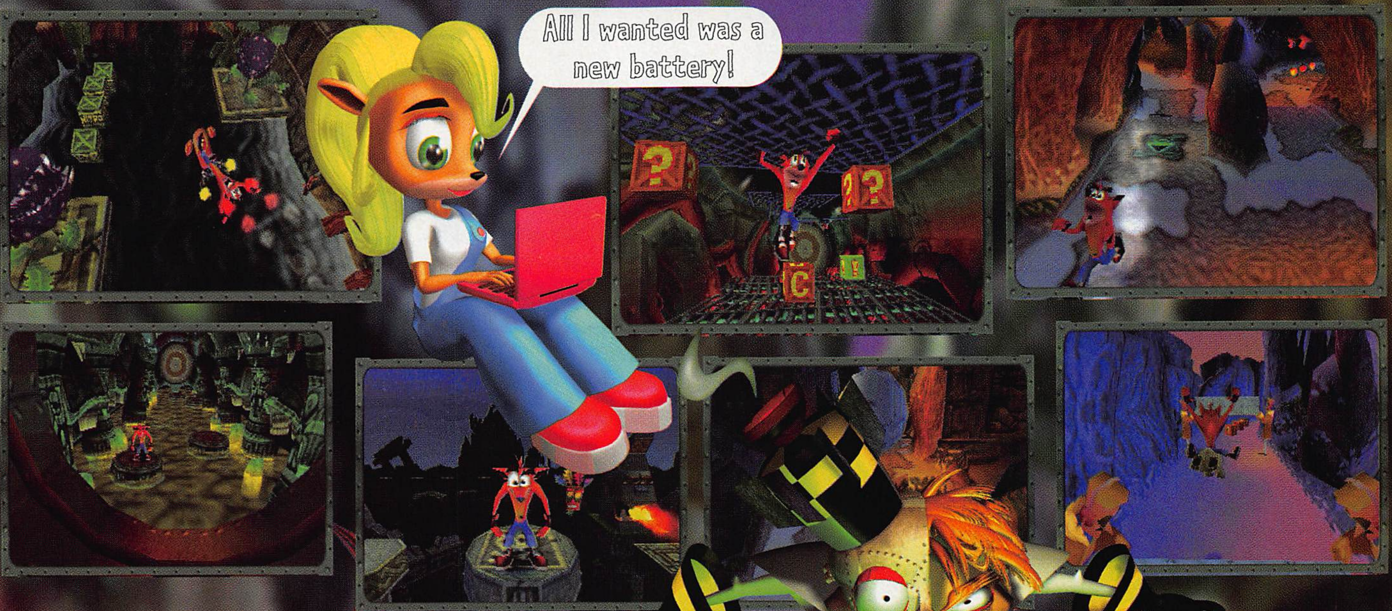
R REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - UEP SYSTEMS	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - SONY	DIFFICULTY - INTER./ADV.
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOW

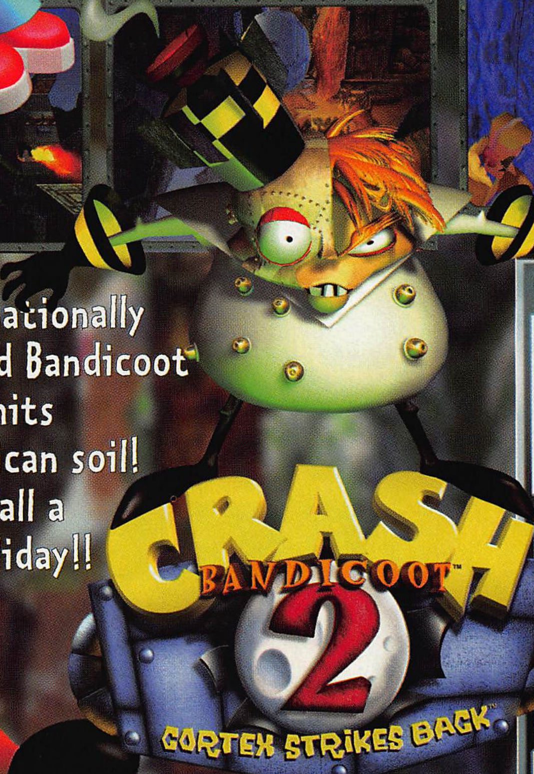


REUBUS
Suddenly, it's all gone "Gray"





Internationally renowned Bandicoot hits American soil! Call a Holiday!!



REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - NAUGHTY DOG

PUBLISHER - SONY

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE +

AVAILABLE - NOW!

It's hard to believe... Naughty Dog didn't even decide to do a sequel until after *Crash Bandicoot* was released, and here we are just a year later, playing a Beta version of *Crash 2: Cortex Strikes Back*. The engine has been re-written from scratch, somehow the visuals are even richer, the game is better balanced, packed with new features, and whether you're a hard-core platformer or new recruit, it's fiercely entertaining. In fact, I'd go as far as saying this truly is a Bandicoot reborn. Naughty Dog has proven to the world (*Crash* is as big in Japan as he is here, a feat of biblical proportions) that not only can lightning strike twice inside of 1 year, but the second shot can be be even stronger than the first.



Like *Crash Bandicoot*, *Crash 2* begins with a spectacular real time intro as Cortex plummets from his last encounter with our famous Bandicoot.

A year later, after regaining his power and aligning with a new cohort, Dr. N. Gin, Cortex needs an Earth bound alliance... and Crash is about to be deceived.



E. STORM
Perfection perfected!!

AND SO IT BEGINS...



ONE YEAR LATER

Crash 2 ditches the island-hopping system and introduces Warp Rooms. From these god-like polygonal domes Crash communicates with Cortex and sister Coco via holographic imagery (stunning), stockpiles gems and crystals, and will enter five glowing portals from which he must emerge with at least a crystal. These are literally Crash's for the taking, no special maneuvering required. Once Cortex has all five, he'll allow (lure) Crash to proceed after warning him of the impending danger that awaits as he ascends. Here is where you'll meet *Crash 2*'s new band of bosses, an inspired bunch with an emphasis on keen maneuvering and, a little wit.

Gameplay otherwise is literally a feast of evolving play mechanics, which include improved elements from the original along with a quiver of all new acrobatics which add immeasurably to the overall experience. The Jet Pack especially tickled my fancy as the fantastic medley (the music this time around-classic) chimes in and the analog wand melts into my thumb. A truly joyous ride, especially once you master flight.

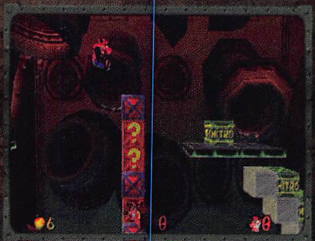


Anyone seen a really big bear?

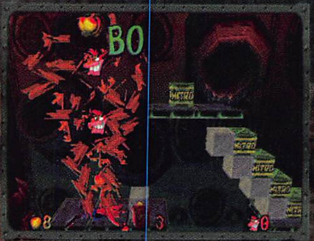


A wee blow on the didgeridoo!

CRASH COURSE #1



Belly flop to break heavy duty crates or, mow thru an entire stack!!



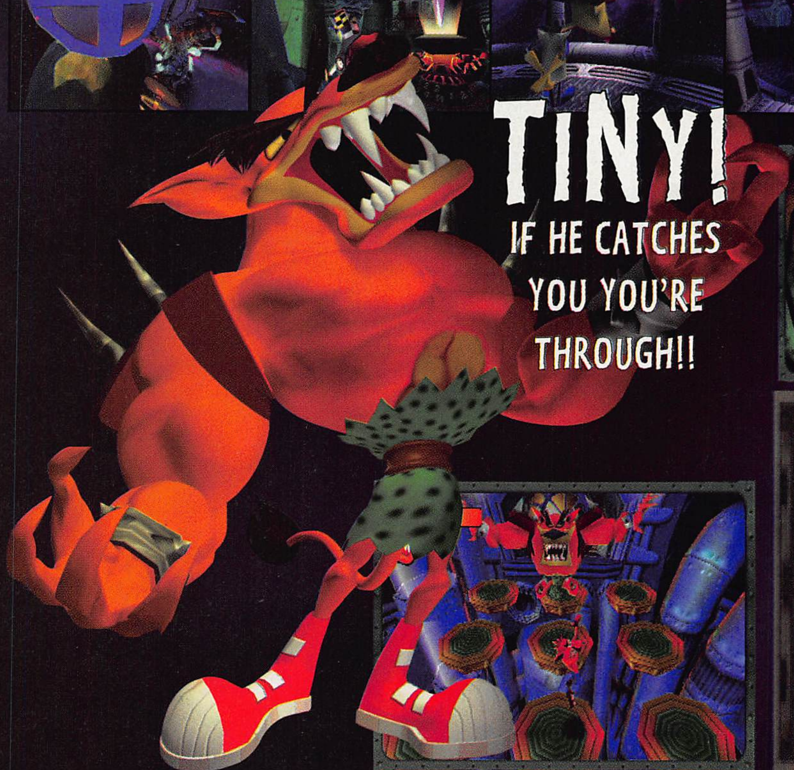






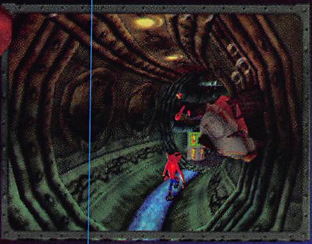






TINY!

IF HE CATCHES YOU YOU'RE THROUGH!!

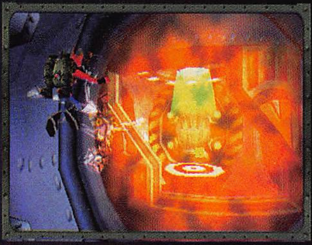




CRASH COURSE #2



At the end of Bear Down, double back, find your li'l buddy and it's off to... **Totally Bear...** Lotsa luck!!





As far as difficulty goes, here too ND has answered the call. As *Crash B.* was just insanely hard at certain times throughout, *C2* is easier to beat yet more difficult to master. It's packed with hidden surprises (which we'll not divulge until the proper time) that are guaranteed to drive even the most apt platformers (like myself) absolutely bonkers.

What's even better is that you can save literally anytime, you will not ever be beaten down in the bonus rounds (which are now as much about training as they are crate collecting) and should you die mid-level, previously crushed crates remain crushed. You see, they've thought of everything!

Did I mention that this is the single most spectacular looking game in the known universe?

Folks, savor this Bandicoot romp because while it may seem we're on the brink of a legendary series, know this. ND's 3 game contract with Universal is a game from being up, and uh, Universal owns the rights to *Crash*. So if ND's next game isn't based on a *Bandicoot*, well... this may be the last time ND and *Crash* have the pleasure (sniff-sniff). Sony will likely swoop up these superstars of software in a RARE kind of way and then, well, who knows? Bottom line (and it literally is) *C2* is everything I expected and more. It's truly something special. Here's to a million sold. **ES**





CRASH COURSE #3



A dead end? I think not! Jump on thru and you're on your way to a shiny green gem!!











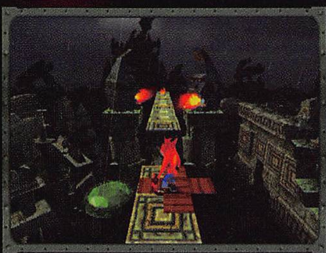








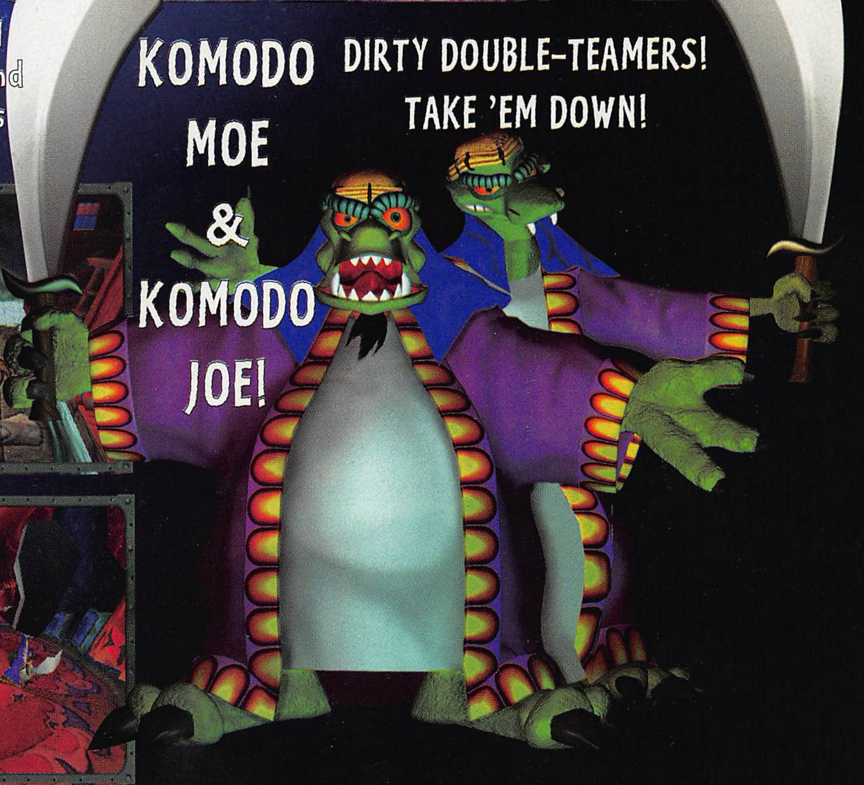




Roo's back and still crazy as a loon! Find the safe spot! He's outta control!







KOMODO MOE & KOMODO JOE!

DIRTY DOUBLE-TEAMERS! TAKE 'EM DOWN!





R REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - NEW LEVEL

PUBLISHER - GT INTERACTIVE

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

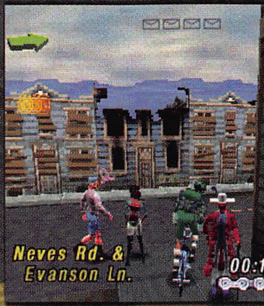
AVAILABLE - OCT



DAS UBER & STORM
GT's pedalin' an employment opportunity. Let's go ridin'!!





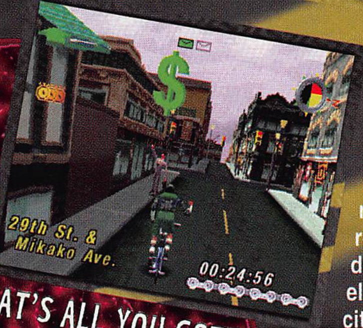


HMMM.. PIMPS, HOOKERS, & DRUG DEALERS... I LOVE L.A.!!

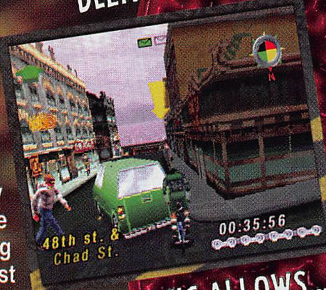




PICK IT UP.... AND DELIVER IT...



THAT'S ALL YOU GOTTA DO...



... IF TRAFFIC ALLOWS...



... AND YOU DON'T GET DISTRACTED...



... OR A CASE OF RABIES!

Never before has the big city demographic been so successfully pinpointed by a video game. It's rude, it's crude, and it pays minimum wage... if you live to collect. It's *Courier Crisis* from New Level Software and GT Interactive. New Level previously brought us *Road Rash* for the Sega CD, in case you're wondering (like it matters).

Conceptually, a game that has you picking up and delivering documents in and around good, bad, and toxic (and everything in between) cityscapes probably sounds a bit narrowly focused. I thought the emphasis would be on riding skills and tricks for the most part and expected little else. On the contrary, whomever's brain-child *Courier Crisis* is, obviously had a detailed scenario playing in his head because the gameplay actually runs pretty deep. Besides skillful riding and aeriel stunts New Level has factored in many other variables. At first, in a training kind of way, on a cheap bike (well, cheap for a GT), you'll easily spot your 1st pick up (big yellow arrow and guy screaming "Over here!") and delivery (big green money sign with guy screaming "C'mon already!") and it will be relatively easy to get the job done. Traffic is light, it's a sunny day and you feel optimistic about the world we live in. As the game and your career progress however, not only are customers farther apart but in between lie a host of urban hazards like all sorts of shady characters, rabid dogs, twisting narrow streets, reckless drivers that never signal, dead ends and just about anything else that needs cleaning up in a big city. Aside from that, the clock is ticking. By level 5 you're broken, bruised and thinking maybe we should just nuke the whole damn thing. To make things ever more joyous while you play, really loud and crappy no-name grunge bangs in the background (it's over, people, life's actually gonna go on) that luckily you can silence in the menu option. Sound like fun? Well, it really is, especially after you get a full suspension bike (you can buy 'em with all that cash your makin') and the levels become excursions in trickery and fast swooping gameplay.

Graphically the game has a full blown case of 1st-generidis, with less-than-desirable textures, and a chugga-lugga frame rate but in the wake of how much live action they've got going on (these cities are alive!) it really doesn't seem to matter all that much. Believe it or not, some games that don't look all that great are actually OK. It's alright to like them.... really. Not every game can be a technical wonderland. Sometimes a good concept and some clever programming is all it takes to have a good time. Such is the case with *Courier Crisis*. So strap on your helmet, grab some mace and have at it! If nothing else, at least you'll have a job! **E**

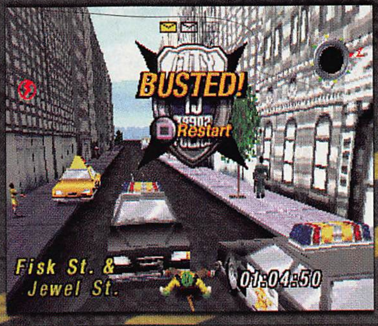
"BOTTOM LINE? YER GONNA SCAB YER ASS ON THE GRITTY 'CRETE AND LOVE EVERY SECOND OF IT!"



RUB IT IN A LITTLE!



PEE WEE'S WET DREAM?



DO NOT PERFORM AERIAL STUNTS ON OR AROUND SQUAD CARS... PUNK!

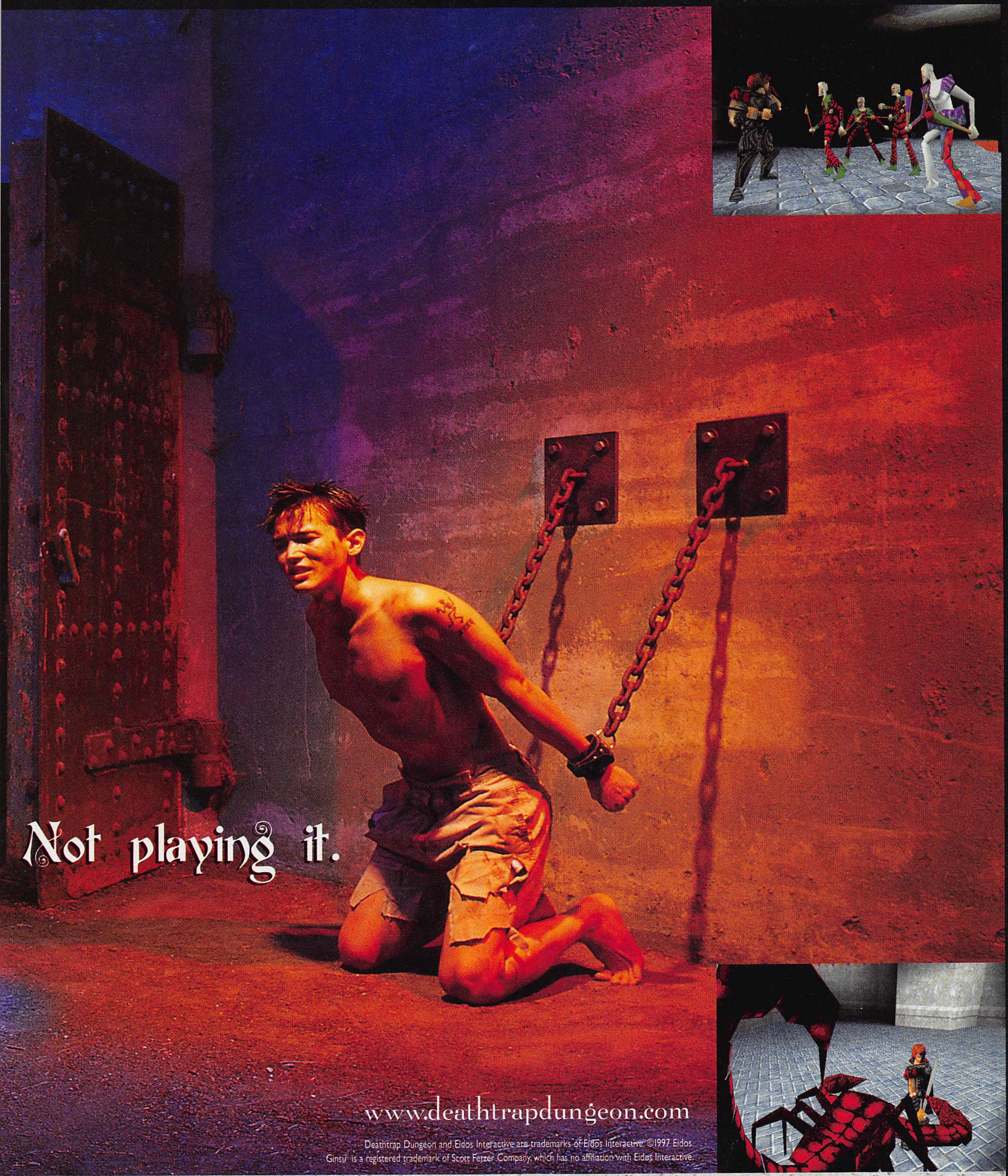


SO YOU BIT IT. AT LEAST YOU GET THIS COOL CUT SCENE TO EASE THE PAIN!



IAN LIVINGSTONE'S
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MORTAL KOMBAT MYTHOLOGIES
SUB-ZERO

The **Mortal Kombat** series has never been one of my particular favorites, although I did like **MK2** a lot (it DID have some really hot gameplay -Knightmare). Now Midway has taken their first stab (ouch!) at something more my speed: a platform-based **Mortal Kombat** adventure, titled **MK Mythologies: Sub Zero**. Taking the infamous palette-swapped ninja to new realms, they've made the decision to meld traditional **MK**-style fighting with platform action and **Flashback**-style puzzle/adventure elements. Quite unsure as to how Midway would handle this strange concoction (and me being a certified platform freak), I donned my battle gear and waded into the bloody waters rather cautiously...

In the graphics dept. it's 2.5D action with digitized sprites and polygonal backgrounds all the way. The screen scales in and out to frame the action appropriately, providing a cinematic look and feel (where have you seen this before?) while the digitized sprites and poly bg's, for the most part, work well together. In some places, though, it doesn't come off as well as I would have liked (when running, for instance). Most of the in-game graphics are nice with some cool water and weather effects, and the visuals get progressively better the further in you go (think **Sub Zero** meets **Abe's Oddysee**). Some bosses, in particular, are very intense: the earth boss, for instance, pounds on you in a body shattering rage, and the fire boss enjoys roasting your sorry marrow with some fantastic flame effects. It all looks pretty cool, even when you're gettin' torn limb from limb.

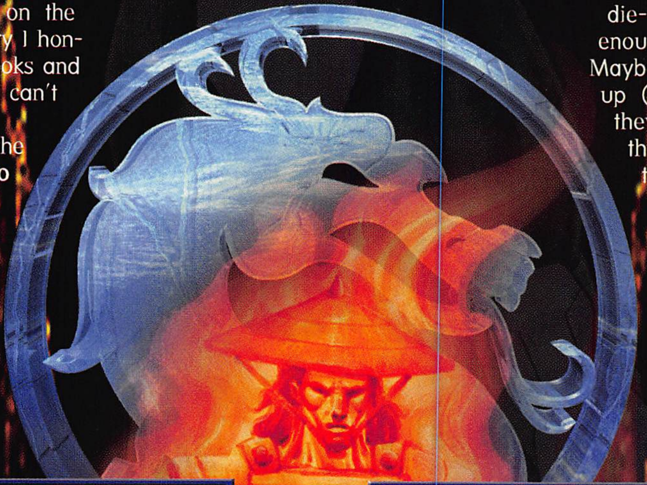
The story is cool, filling in some of the gaps from previous **MK**'s and creating more new questions. The acting in the FMV sequences is a bit weak, but it's still quite cool in a B-movie kind of way. Based on the strength of the intense background story I honestly think the **MK** series belongs in books and movies more than it does in games—I can't wait for **MK2: Apocalypse**!

However, things start to go awry in the gameplay department: perhaps **Sub Zero** performed a 'Lobotomy' ("Excellent") on some of the staff, but the platforming and fighting mixture isn't exactly a match made in heaven. First of all, the jumping is very difficult to come to grips with. You can thank the wacky use of standard **MK** controls (press up to jump) in a platform setup with only a slight tweak. This tends to make most jumps a hair-pulling experience; I never felt like I had complete control over Sub Zero due to the awkward nature of 'joypad jumping™'. And as if jumping wasn't pain enough, there's also a button for changing your favorite ninja's direction. That's right, he will not face the opposite direction without hitting a button. While this is understandable in combat (yes, that's combat with a 'c') due to the fact that you occasionally face multiple opponents, it's a real kicker when you consistently fall to your doom in the platform areas—you'll be seeing the 'falling to your death' cinema quite often, I'm afraid.

The rest of the game consists of standard **MK**-style fighting which I'm not all that thrilled about, but some **MK** freaks may like. And of course SZ has his arsenal of moves from the past, including the standard ice blast and ground freeze maneuvers which must now be earned (one at a time) by gaining experience points during battles— "Hmm, RPGs are hot now, let's throw in an experience point system... Yeah, that's cool!"—uh, not the best way to go guys. Oh, and I mustn't forget those love 'em or hate 'em chain combos...

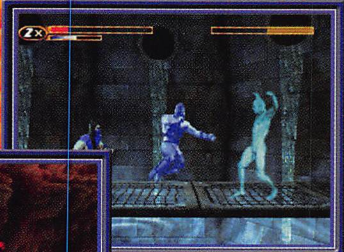
Let's just say this game isn't everything that it could have been. It'll probably sell truckloads on its name alone, but with some serious tuning it could have been a genuinely hot game. Perhaps the N64 rev will address some of these problems, but I'm not holding my breath. As it stands, it doesn't seem to have enough fighting for any but the most die-hard **MK** fan, and lacks solid enough control for platform junkies. Maybe when **MK Mythologies 2** shows up (and it will—Lui Kang, anyone?) they can fix these glaring flaws. Until then, you may want to take a look at the N64 version before dropping the bucks on this one, or wait for **Crash 2**: it'll definitely satisfy those platform cravings (I need a fix, man...just one...‹shiver›).

ECM

















R REVIEW — PlayStation

DEVELOPER - MIDWAY	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - MIDWAY	DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOW

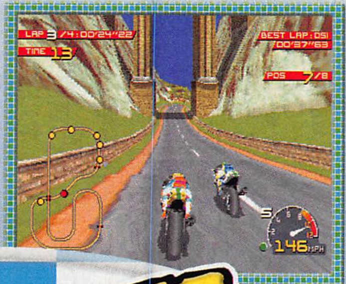


ECM
Flawless Victory? Um, not quite...



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NHLPA
MIDWAY
KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
NINTENDO 64
PlayStation
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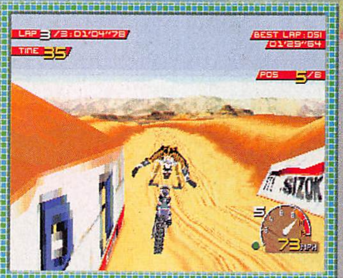

MOTO RACER

HIT THE DIRT... ...AND THE ASPHALT!!!

From the French outfit that brought you *Out of This World, Flashback, Shaq Fu* (brrrrr) and *Fade to Black*, comes their latest adrenaline-inducing title: *Moto Racer*, a graphically intense motorcycle racer with speed to burn. Featuring two distinct styles of cycle racing—dirt and street—across a wide array of tracks, *Moto Racer* is comparable to *VMX Racing* and *Manx TT* (home version), essentially giving you two different games in one. Before I begin, I feel I should make one point quite clear: This is arcade-style racing—no frills, balls-to-the-wall speed. No tuning, no tweaking, and no buying better bikes. We clear? Good.



Upon starting *MR*, you can select from a preset number of bikes (street and dirt) which have varying abilities. I recommend good grip and to heck with the brakes—real gamers don't use brakes (or so I'm told). There are also four different racing perspectives which are pretty much useless, other than the default and first person views.




The street bike sections rock with white-knuckle speed, and super-responsive control. Blazing along at 30 fps, the engine powerin' this puppy has enough speed left over to set up a donor program for speed-impaired games—it's rippingly fast. Textures on the tracks are clean and sharp and the draw-in is kept to a minimum (once in a while, though, you'll see some continent building). The rider also moves fluidly, leaning into turns and such, showing great attention to detail. The control is tight, if a little twitchy, requiring the memorization of the track to win. There are some nice crashes, and a full grid of competitors out for blood in hard mode—bring the Band-Aids. One minor gripe would have to be the use of 'wheelies' as a means of providing a turbo boost. At any point you can pull one of these and actually go faster than your top speed—cool, but weird (same for the dirt bike courses). The tracks range from a countryside vista (complete with windmills) to an urban track with towering skyscrapers and multiple tunnels, a la *Ridge Racer*.



Which brings us to the dirt bike sequences. After the mixed reception that *VMX* received it's nice to see another pseudo-motocross game this quickly. The dirt bike sections in *Moto Racer* feature two varieties of motocross track and a clutch of tracks that you could refer to as "fantasy" tracks (Lost Ruins, Great Wall of China, etc.). The action is fast and furious with lots of collisions and insane jumps—extra padding on the seat may be a good idea for this one. Riders pulling tricks and sliding through turns add a nice touch. Again the engine is a marvel to watch, with the same 30 FPS action and less draw-in than the street bike courses. It seems that Delphine can work wonders in any genre (other than fighting—ack, *Shaq Fu* flashback) they put their hands on.

Bonuses like mini-bikes (super fast li'l devils) and mirrored tracks await the speed junkies that enjoy becoming one with the asphalt (and on hard mode, you will). They seem to have gotten it all together in their first ever racing game. I'm duly impressed and all of you that crave blazing speed (*Rage Racer* addicts especially) will be in total euphoria. Now, about that 2D sequel to *Fade to Black*... ECM



REVIEW

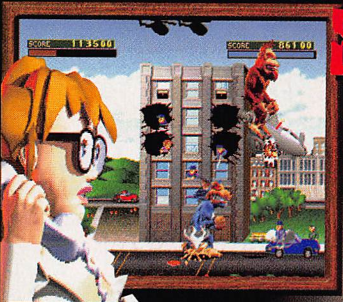
PlayStation

DEVELOPER - DELPHINE	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - ELECTRONIC ARTS	DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER



ECM
Is that Conrad on one of those bikes?

EAT!! DESTROY!! BELCH!!













Way back in the glory days of arcades (circa the mid-'80s, in my opinion), there were actually more than just fighting, driving and big deluxe-style multi-thousand dollar arcade games that cost less than a buck to play—these days I need to take out a loan if I want to play one of Sega or Namco's newer arcade titles more than once. Most of these classics featured original ideas and gameplay that compelled you to repeatedly insert several shiny items known as quarters (these days we have those new-fangled debit cards...geez) which they devoured faster than Kid Fan mowing through an anchovy pizza. Which brings us to the current revival of classic arcade games on home consoles—*Tempest 2000* did it first (and best)—now here's *Rampage World Tour*, an upgrade of the classic quarter-muncher.

Rampage (for those of you born too late to experience it) featured three monsters (a wolfman, a Godzilla-like lizard, and a King Kong clone) traveling to various US cities and sampling the local cuisine—people, buildings and various artillery from the US armed forces. It was addicting and I actually made it 92 days (days are levels) into it before some misbegotten youth kicked the machine for eating his money, thereby ending my game...let's just say I sent his family a nice wreath of flowers. Anyway, *World Tour* is a complete graphic overhaul of the original with most of the same monster-bashing, building-smashing goodness. You again take control of one of three monsters (Ralph, Lizzie and George—the same gang as in the original) and go on a binge of destruction and mayhem, all the while eating everything in sight. Each of the main monsters is rendered as a clay figure and looks quite nice. This does tend to jar, as the rest of the game's graphics are rendered and traditional game sprites. Everything is animated smooth as silk, though.

The gameplay is simple and effective—you'll be smashin' and trashin' in no time. There's a jump, punch, and kick button; fairly basic stuff. The goal is to destroy everything in sight: people, cars, tanks, mechs (!), and of course big buildings. There's a fantastic variety of snacks to devour, just make sure you only eat the edible stuff (this means no toilets, poison, etc.). Elvis, little green men and the couple from *American Gothic* even make an appearance—shortly before disappearing...yummy.

I love this game! Anybody that enjoyed the original *Rampage* should be at the store now, and anyone that craves some 'nostalgia' should check it out. This one didn't last in the arcades—I hear it wouldn't allow itself to be abused with one of those debit thingees—so now's your chance to snap it up. Grab some friends and have a ball...just don't forget the Pepto <burp>. ***ECM***











R REVIEW | PlayStation

DEVELOPER - GAME REFUGE	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - MIDWAY	DIFFICULTY - EASY
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER



ECM
It may be time for some of the pink stuff...

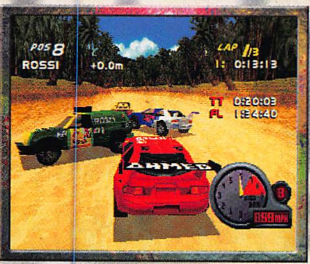

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GRAND TOUR RACING '98






Those with a taste for the driving pleasures, prepare for *Grand Tour Racing '98*, coming your way from European developers Eutechnyx courtesy of Activision. Featuring a *Car and Driver* license which allowed the editors of that publication to provide input on handling and car physics, *GTR '98* attempts and succeeds in the daunting task of mixing several different classes of racing machine into one, coherent driving game—with excellent graphics to boot.

Perhaps most impressive in *Grand Tour '98* is the track design. Not only are the courses incredibly long, but also incredibly varied. There are six tracks to choose from- Scotland, Switzerland, Easter Island, Moscow, Egypt, and Hong Kong. Now, each one of these courses features six variations on its basic layout, giving a you a whopping total of 36 courses that are unique in some way or another, whether it's the class of car you're racing to the time of day or weather conditions. In the normal one-player game, each successive track variation is opened up once you place first in the initial track offering. This then opens up layout number two and so on till you reach the sixth alteration of each course.

Thankfully, the potentially tricky implementation of multiple car style racing is handled quite well here. Rally, Sports, Buggy, Dakar, and Indy type cars are all very well represented, each with appropriate and unique handling characteristics. With eight teams and five classes, that equals forty individual vehicles! And control for each is good, even if it takes a while to get used to *GTR*'s control set-up. With a digital pad, the top L and R buttons function as a quick turn, literally flinging your car left or right. It's a bit tricky at first, though useful when mastered. The more elegant solution is to play with Sony's analog pad or Namco's NegCon. On the sound effects front, *GTR '98* excels with great car sounds (the buggies are notable for their realistic two-stroke cacophony) and tons of ambient, atmosphere-enhancing environmental effects like animals sounding off and interesting crowd noises.

Like any self respecting modern game, *GTR '98* delivers the graphical goods. Most notable is an almost complete lack of draw-in. The track can and will stretch way out in front of you. And this accomplishment does not come at the expense of trackside detail and complexity, nor is it facilitated by copious turns and dips in the track to pull the horizon in. No, no, this is simply an ace engine, replete with wonderful scenery and substantial visual variety throughout the courses.






GTR '98 is also notable for its impressive two-player split screen. The game remains highly playable and there is little sacrifice in frame rate or detail. Eutechnyx was even considerate enough to include a four-player link-up mode for those of the dual TV persuasion. You'll also find the usual time trial and season play modes for added replayability.

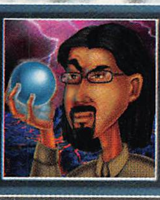
Eutechnyx has created an impressive and expansive racing game with huge variety and solid graphics. While it may not have the simple elegance and frame rate of something like *Rage Racer* (nor its soundtrack, sadly) it excels in its own, multitudinous ways. You'll be delighted by the no pop-up graphics and the sheer size of the game will have you coming back for more. Racing fans should appreciate all that *GTR '98* has to offer. SD

R REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - EUTECHNYX
PUBLISHER - ACTIVISION
FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-4
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - NOW



SUBSTANCE D There's a load to do in Eutechnyx's solid driver.

MDK

SQUEEZED ONTO CONSOLE FOR YOUR GAMING SATISFACTION... NOW THE FUTURE OF MANKIND DEPENDS ON YOU.

From a sterile place where games are played on keyboards like some mad torture, comes MDK PlayStation. Neversoft has done the improbable, and now, after the final check provided by creator David Perry, MDK PS is ready for *your* approval!

We've been following MDK since the console spark was ignited. We've done a cover (Vol. 5 Issue 1), been behind the scenes, detailed the story and have previewed several discs. So now, in this final review, I'm here to provide the final word on how this breakthrough PC game plays on the format it was bred for.





R REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - NEVERSOFT

PUBLISHER - PLAYMATES

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - OCTOBER



E_STORM
Kurt? Kurt, can you hear me!!?? They're heading for Agoura and, and, OH SHHH...

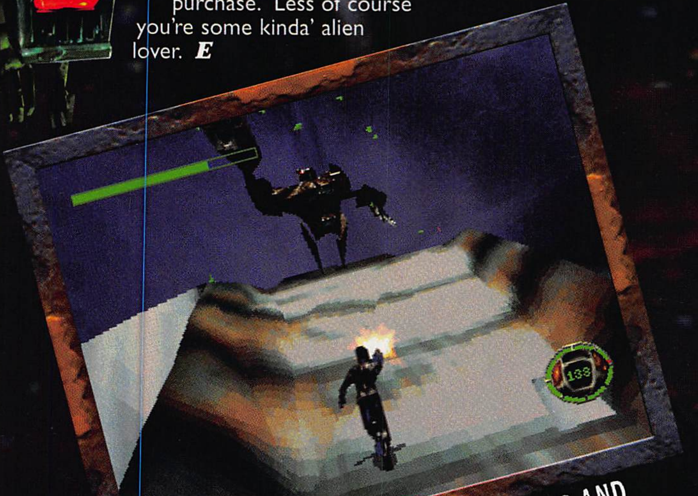
OK, here's the scoop de jour. Everything you see, even the most littered of arenas, moves at a smooth 30fps, and it hardly ever bogs. Aside from that, the animation is first rate, the music and sound effects dazzling, and the control intuitive. Having never played this game prior to its PS arrival, all I can say is *Holy Cow! MDK* really is in a class by itself. Part corridor shooter, part adventure, part platformer and all good 'n tasty, the elements of alien domination, humor, and peril mount an assault on your psyche unlike any I've witnessed before. Complex puzzles make way to hideous shootouts and the next thing you know cows are falling from the sky.

Simply brilliant game design (if not a bit diabolical) is at hand. God, I miss Shiny games. Why can't they make more?!

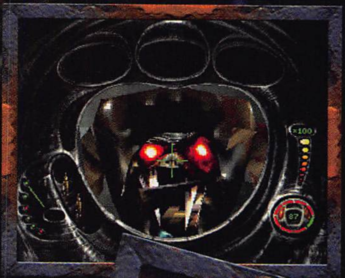
If you think you're sniping in *GoldenEye*... think again. Kurt sticks his gun on his head and becomes a human homing device! These moments of glory play a key role in the outcome, sure, but they also provide moments of sheer adulation and humor. Snipin' a dude's head from 500 yards feels... I dunno', frickin' awesome. It's long, it's involved, and you'll play it a bunch of times. *MDK* demands a purchase. Less of course you're some kinda' alien lover. ***E***







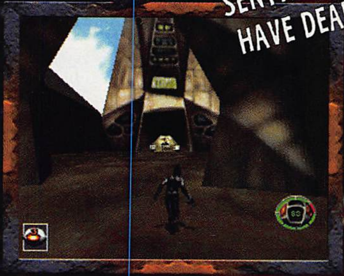
SENTRIES ARE TOUGH AS NAILS AND HAVE DEADLY AIM, SO SNIPE 'EM IF YOU CAN.







Kurt-kabobs, anyone? Er, aim for the middle!



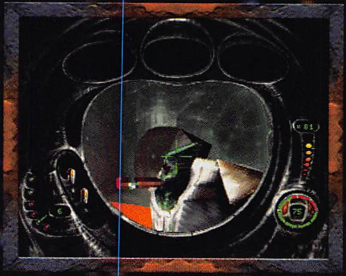
















In the above sequence Kurt happens upon a room so packed with Sentries that no matter how cunning, he'll never get through alive. Mosey over to the left however, and an unknowing Alert Drone is easily possessed. Once he's snuck past the unsuspecting (OK, stupid) Sentries (by pressing buttons he even drones "alert-alert") he finds "The World's Most Interesting Bomb" which, as the name implies, they become so enthralled by, once Kurt sets it off, they just stand there and look at it until it blows them all into Sentry McNuggets. Such is much of the gameplay in MDK.



NEED FOR SPEED V-RALLY











R REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - INFOGRAMES

PUBLISHER - EA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - HARD

AVAILABLE - NOW



ECM
I think the UK may be a little too rally-mad...

After enjoying months as a top-selling PS title (indeed, a record-shattering run) in the UK, *V-Rally* comes to the US courtesy of EA. This game went over huge with rally-mad Europeans and now it comes to us with a shiny new *Need for Speed* logo plastered on it, in the hopes of boosting sales to casual gamers that seemed to actually enjoy prior PS *NFS* games (thankfully, they are now housed in state mental hospitals, where they can't infect others). Seeing as how Chief Hambleton was too busy cleaning his lair (nasty place) for this review, it seems the task has fallen to me to pen the review for the second French-designed racer this month (*Moto Racer* being the other, also from EA). Would I even be worthy to bask in the light of such wonder? Or would it be another example of those crazy Old Worlders going berserk for something less than impressive gameplay-wise?



It appears Infogrames has done its homework when it comes down to the ins and outs of rally racing. There's a bevy of cars to choose from, each featuring its own unique attributes and numerous items which you can modify to suit your tastes. Gear box, understeer/oversteer, and suspension may all be adjusted and setting the car up properly for the type of track you are racing on is integral to doing well in this game—it can get quite ugly otherwise. The tracks themselves take place in various countries—New Zealand, Indonesia, and jolly ol' England herself—and feature driving during all times of day and night.

> *If you love rally games, don't hesitate on this one.*



So you've picked out your car and are ready to hit the dirt—what can you expect graphically? Well, again it appears that Infogrames did a good job here, as the environments are lushly textured and feature a wide array of locales in which to churn some mud. Expansive locations with some nice weather effects make this game look good, but not great as I had expected; especially after all the commotion surrounding this game. Special note must go to the night driving sequences, though, which feature hot lighting with real-time headlights—very impressive. The frame rate and draw in are done well, with little pop-up and constant 30FPS speed. But the graphics (overall) are not as good as those in *GTR*, which is a shame figuring the amount of excitement Europeans had over the visuals. The graphics just aren't the revelation many expect.





Gameplay anyone? After all, that's the most important issue among hard core gamers, right? Well, for the most part gameplay is excellent. Pick and tune a car and hit the track with three other drivers vying for victory. Steering is responsive, and negotiating the various tracks is a joy. However, there is one little sticking point with the control—the physics are, how shall I say, wrong. I'm not a rally racing expert, but I'm reasonably sure that rally cars tend to play by Mr. Newton's laws. What I mean is that the instance you touch any part of the roadside, the car takes an abrupt departure from reality and launches into the air, spinning end over end, dancing like a monkey on crack. It's frustrating on an order of magnitude equivalent to getting the wrong thing at the drive thru and not noticing till you're home ("Where the hell are my fries?!"). Basically you can go through the first two laps of any race, make one mistake on the third lap, and find yourself in third or fourth place (grrrr...). If you can keep from touching the sides of the track this game is great, it just takes massive amounts of patience, practice, and a resilient controller (you'll be chucking that sucker at speeds you never thought possible till ya get it down).

Well, I think you get the idea. If you love rally games, don't hesitate on this one. If however you're looking for another hot racer to tide you over till *Gran Turismo* (we're not worthy) shows up, it might be best to rent this one first. As it stands, it seems that our European friends are as much a victim of hype as all those good people that bought the prior *Need for Speed* titles; maybe they'll commit them too... **ECM**



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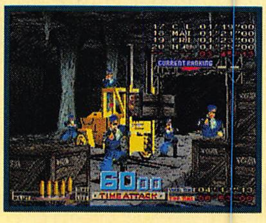


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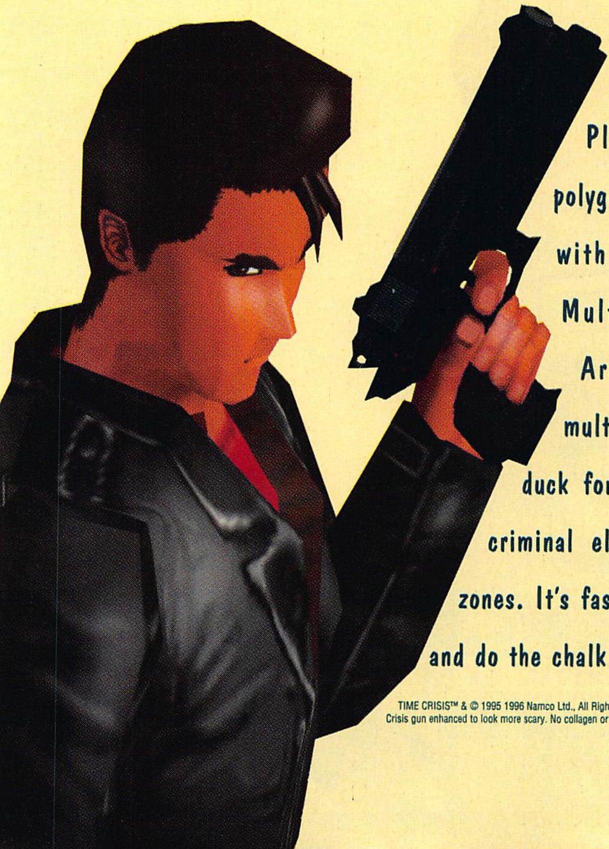
THE MOST ACCURATE GUN ON THE PLAYSTATION CONSOLE!!!!!!!!



Presenting a shooting game so intense it comes with it's own weapon. Time Crisis includes the formidable firearm pictured here, the original award-winning arcade shooting game, plus a whole new shoot-fest specifically created for the PlayStation™ console. Full 3D polygon environments surround you with full 3D polygon enemies. Multiple modes include Story, Arcade and Time Attack, plus multiple endings. Blast away and duck for cover as you exterminate the criminal element in a variety of hidden zones. It's fast. It's frenzied. It's shoot first and do the chalk outline later.







Guncon

GUNCON FOR USE WITH SOFTWARE THAT DISPLAYS THE GUNCON ICON.

TEEN AGES 13+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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PlayStation

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Coming soon from Electronic Arts, *Auto Destruct* attempts to put a new spin on the well worn combat/driving genre. Resembling a curious yet effective mixture of titles like *Felony 11-79* (*Runabout*), *Twisted Metal*, and the driving bits from *Die Hard Trilogy*, *Auto Destruct* throws you into a road-racing blast-fest with a twist—the action doesn't take place on any track, it happens in a fully realized 3D city.

Set in the "near future," you play the part of a champion race car driver who witnesses the brutal murder of his beloved wife and daughter by a fanatical cult known only as the Disciples of Lazarus. Now, after being recruited by a mysterious government organization, you are given a chance to avenge your family's death by using your driving skills to thwart any and all plans the devious Disciples of Lazarus may have.

AUTO DESTRUCT









In its current 60% status, *Auto Destruct* is already displaying formidable graphical skills, with its vast 3D environments, *Die Hard Trilogy*-style bombastic explosions, and impressive speed. You can view the action from a wide number of different angles, ranging from the infamous 'hood' cam to a *Rush Hour*-style top/down sky cam that really demonstrates the flexibility of the engine.

Like *Runabout*, you have a huge 'go anywhere' city environment to explore (replete with plenty of short-cuts), though you must fulfill your specified mission orders to proceed. Objectives include taking out enemies with an assortment of weapons, picking up and transporting innocents to safety, diffusing bombs and much, much more. The action is a nice blend of shooting and driving, and anyone who considers *Death Race 2000* to be high art will surely appreciate the bloody tire tracks left behind after driving through a pool of some poor pedestrian's life juices (you even skid around for a second!). What a delight for the kids watching at home, right little Jimmy?

So far, everything is looking excellent, and the pieces are falling into place for the basis of what looks to be a really fun driving/combat game. Let's hope Electronic Arts can put it all together in time for a Christmas release. ***SD***

"...a road-racing blast-fest with a twist..."



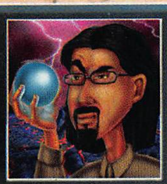




P PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - ELECTRONIC ARTS	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - ELECTRONIC ARTS	DIFFICULTY - N/A
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - DECEMBER



SUBSTANCE D
I spy bloody tire tracks.

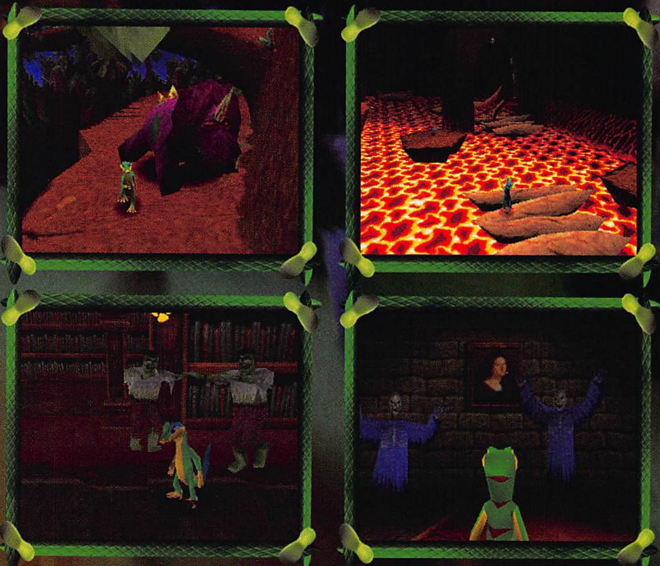
••••gex 2 update••••

We're back with more coverage of Crystal Dynamics' latest and possibly greatest title, *Gex: Enter the Gecko*. This month we received a more complete burn with a tweaked game engine and most of the new levels in place (albeit early). We knew you'd want all the info you could get on this amazing looking Mario64 clone, so we thought we'd bring you up to speed. Enjoy. K



••••prehistoric••••

By far the most complete of all the worlds, the prehistoric levels exhibit a myriad of challenging platform sections along with a full complement of enemies. Raptors, pterodactyls, falling rocks and oceans of lava provide the opposition, as Gex searches for meat bones and TVs. Watch out for the hysterical stone age graffiti dotted around the stages, including a poster campaign to re-elect mayor 'Ogg'.



••••haunted house••••

The second most complete world (so far) also featured plenty of enemies including ghosts, frankensteins, stretching 'face' walls (right out of *The Frighteners!*) and Chucky dolls that just don't know when to quit. Proximity lanterns demonstrate the game's impressive lighting, while Gex collects hockey masks (hmm, wonder where that idea came from) and avoids ax-wielding suits of armor.



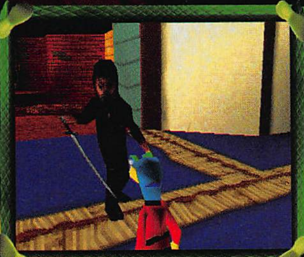
••••extra stages••••

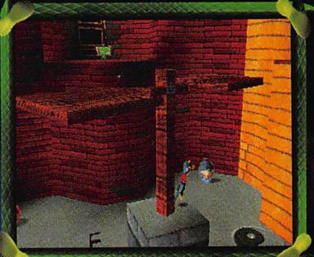
We're not sure how these extra stages fit into the game, but we think they may be bonus rounds. Occasionally Gex is called upon to collect a certain number of items in an environment in a limited amount of time. The two bonus rounds we saw were set in a crumbled Aztec temple and a contemporary New York street (Gex wears a cop hat). There is also an awesome boss stage based on the *Godzilla* movies where Gex is 100ft tall and must battle a giant 'robo-Gex' in downtown Tokyo.



····kung-fu····

Ah-so! Gex turns Bruce Lee and dons a master's gi as he enters into an ancient world of Chinese architecture and sword swinging ninjas. There are plenty of dojos to infiltrate, windows and pots to break, and some of the largest and most impressive looking environments in the game. I love Gex's idle animation in this section. Leave him alone for a second and he'll strike a *Karate Kid* style 'Mantis' pose.









GEX
ENTER THE GECKO

····space····

This world parodies every sci-fi film you can think of from *Star Wars* to *Star Trek*. The detail-rich environments feature downed UFOs, malfunctioning robots, luminous green mushrooms, and even walls with blinking eyes. There are two distinct sections to this world: interior and exterior. Outside, Gex must leap between floating platforms (don't fall, it's a long way down) and climb vast radio antennas, while inside, he uses a special green energy power-up to activate pulsing light bridges. One of the enemies wields a light saber, as does Gex in one of his idles, and the whole world is littered with in-jokes and humorous touches. In space no one can hear you laugh...





····cartoon····

Looney Toons! In the pastel-shaded cartoon world anything can happen—and does. Giant flowers pull out sledgehammers and attempt to squash Gex; Elmer Fudd like hunters enjoy 'lizard' season, and all the time the sky rains a mixture of giant weights, anvils and old women. This landscape is clearly based on the Tex Avery and Chuck Jones 'toons of the '50s, and it looks great. My favorite world so far.

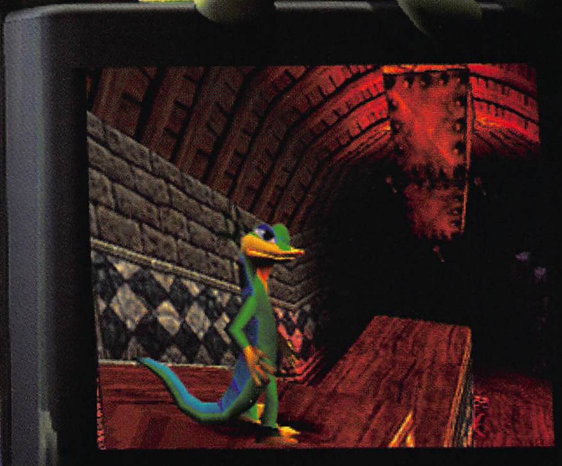
P PREVIEW

PlayStation

- DEVELOPER - CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
- PUBLISHER - MIDWAY
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1
- DIFFICULTY - N/A
- AVAILABLE - WINTER



KNIGHTMARE
Huh huh, he said 'enter'.







Skullmonkeys

U UPDATE

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - THE NEVERHOOD

PUBLISHER - DREAMWORKS

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

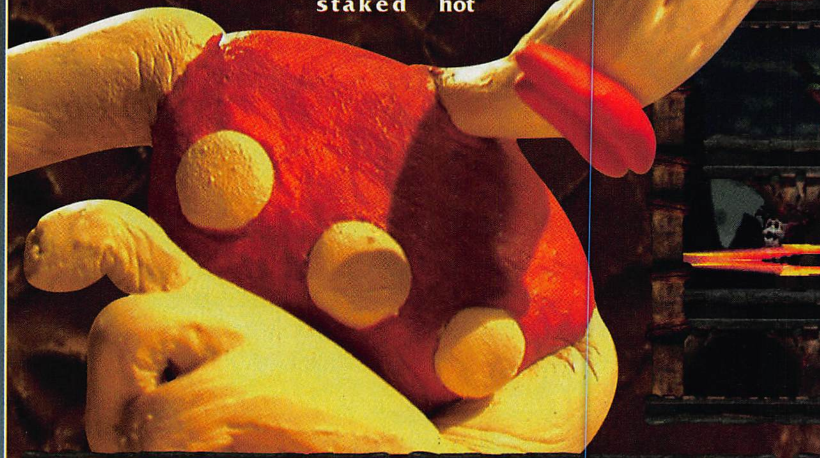
DIFFICULTY - TBA

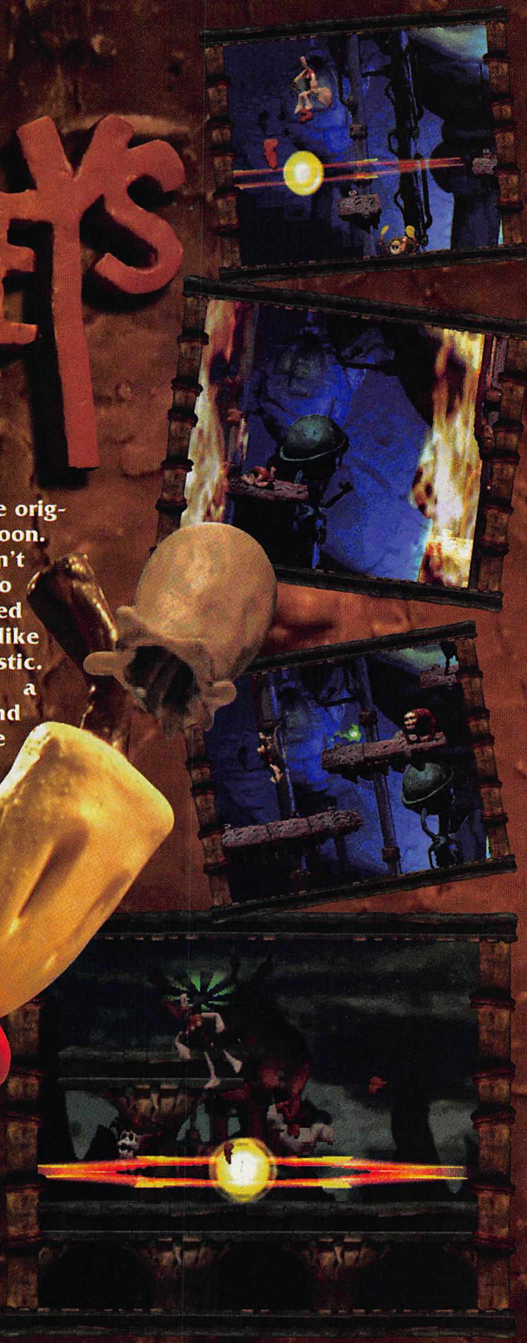
AVAILABLE - 1ST QTR '98

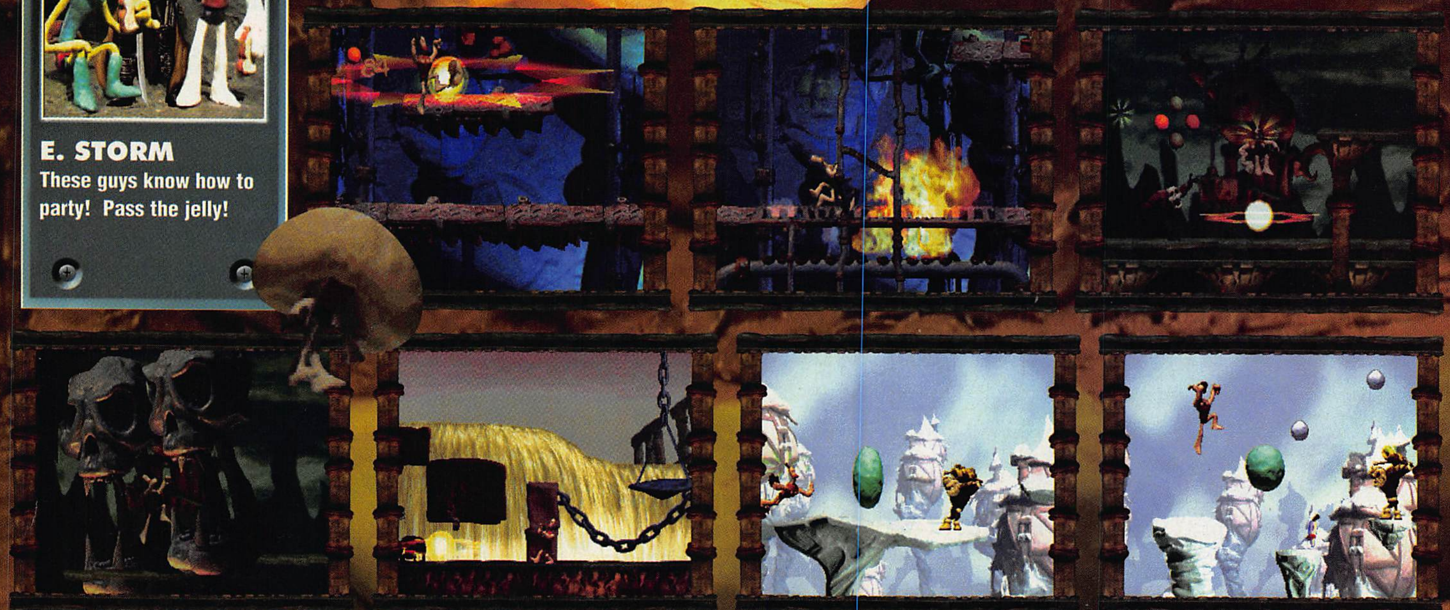


E. STORM
These guys know how to party! Pass the jelly!

I finally got my hands on a Skullmonkey! Soft little fellers... cute too, in a mutley sort of way. Doug TenNapel's latest brainchild, following the underrated *Neverhood* on PC, marks his return to the action/platform genre and at the same time further shows his commitment to traditional game-play values and hand-made animation. Wunderkind Doug and Master animator Mike Dietz broke off from Shiny some time ago and although that departure has had little effect on the console world (where they staked their claim with the original *EWJ*), it will soon. *Skullmonkeys* isn't just another video game to be played and cast aside like so much plastic. *Skullmonkeys* is a labor of love and invention. A game so riddled with ingenuity and originality that aside from being a burning hot

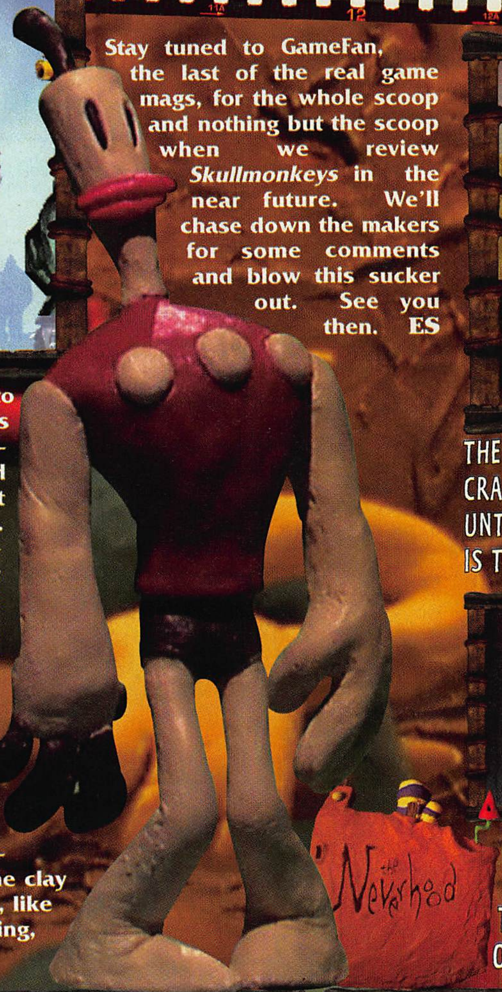








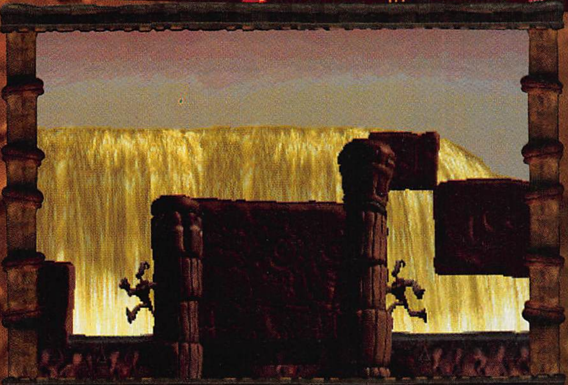




platformer it'd be worth owning just to show nay-sayers how far video games have come. The opening and sporadically sprinkled cinemas (constructed entirely of clay) are some of the most stellar achievements I have ever seen. Not only are they painstakingly animated but they're funny in a way only Doug's team could conjure. I have so much respect for people who, rather than just get by, truly give, as these people do.

I can comment little on the overall gameplay experience as it's still pretty early at this point, but I will say that I smell a 100% old school platformer with all the challenge of the classics we love and the graphic punch of a true living breathing world in motion. Not only are the clay elements stupendous but the effects, like violent plumes of fire, real time lighting, and animated BGs are inspired.

Stay tuned to GameFan, the last of the real game mags, for the whole scoop and nothing but the scoop when we review *Skullmonkeys* in the near future. We'll chase down the makers for some comments and blow this sucker out. See you then. **ES**



THE HUGE CLAY WORLDS ARE FULL OF NOOKS & CRANNIES (AND SKULLMONKEYS!) SO LEAVE NO CLAY UNTURNED. THAT WATERFALL IN THE BACKGROUND IS TOTALLY ANIMATED!

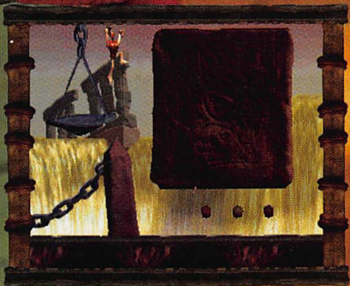




EVEN MORE MAD CINEMAS AWAIT AS YOU PROGRESS, AND BELIEVE ME WHEN I TELL YOU, THEY ARE GENUINELY HILARIOUS AND OUTSTANDINGLY ANIMATED.









Monster Rancher





The Tamagotchi and its countless rip-offs are all the rage these days in the US and Japan. For those of you that are just too cool to be seen with one of those little stress inducers, here's a game for you: Tecmo's *Monster Rancher*. It takes the Japanese' obsessive compulsion with virtual pet games (*Princess Maker*, *Pocket Monster* (Nintendo's salvation, btw), and yes, *Tamagotchi*) to a new realm of madness and lunacy.

Figuring that this would be another among countless lame attempts at cashing in on the success of the virtual pet/life simulator craze, I groaned slightly and prepared to wade through another cheesy game (I get a lot of those here <grumble>) only to find that it's pretty decent—check that: it ROCKS! Never did I ever expect to love a game like this. I generally lump these types of games with the Tokimemo's of the world. Ya know, those lame 'dating sims' for people who spend too much time playing video games...err, uh, never mind. I always scoffed (more like rolled on the floor in spasms of laughter) at Net denizens' pathetic attempts to get games like this translated for our market. Not this time, though—I'm leading the charge on this one!

CREATE YOUR OWN MONSTER!!





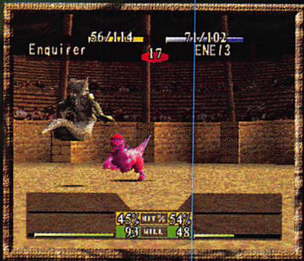


This game places you in the role of, what else, a monster rancher. At the beginning of the game you are assigned a helper by the name of Holly (you really didn't think they would forget the cute anime chick, did you?) who will help guide you through the subtle nuances of raising your very own blood thirsty killer to compete in mortal combat (that's combat, NOT kombat) The goal here is to build the ultimate death machine, and that's what makes it so cool. At the outset, after 'acquiring' Holly, you are given a choice of one of three monster types to raise as your very own: Dino, Riger, or Suezo (it's an eye with one 'leg'—weird). Each is best suited to your particular level of skill at crafting a seasoned beastie. Best yet, taking a cue from the old *Bar-code Battler* system, you can pop in ANY CD (yes, even Saturn discs) and have the game make a monster for you! You can get some pretty freaky mutants this way (my personal fav thus far being a mud man created with the aid of They Might Be Giants' *Flood* album). For beginners it's best to stick with the pre-generated monsters, however.

I'll be back next month with a full review on this awesome new game from Tecmo; expect a high score. They really seem to have their act together, as *Stackers* (see PS Coming Soon for the info on that) is a great puzzler, *Dead or Alive* is looking super-hot (are you ready Saturn owners?) and now this. The holiday season is looking extremely bright for this talented developer and *Monster Rancher* is the crowning jewel—no really, it is...now where's that new *Ninja Gaiden* game? ***ECM***





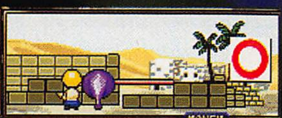












P PREVIEW | PlayStation

DEVELOPER - TECMO	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - TECMO	DIFFICULTY - EASY
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - WINTER



ECM Monsters, monsters everywhere... And I love it!!!






Vehicle-based 3D shooters are nothing new. Neon did it with *Tunnel B1*, Core did it with *Blam! Machinehead* and now Hammerhead (a new company made up of ex-Traveller's Tales employees) are doing it with *Shadow Master*. And doing it with skill, I might add.

Your mission in *Shadow Master* is to protect your planet from a dictatorship (led by the *Shadow Master*) that has stripped bare and mechanized the life forms of all the other planets in your solar system. Armed only with a hi-tech assault buggy you must do battle with all manner of insectoid and bio-mechanical life forms in your fight to defend your home world and put a stop to the Shadow Master's onslaught.

The game is comprised of 16 levels spread across seven very different worlds, each with its own distinguishing visual characteristics. There's Halos, an arid, desert environment; Silvan, a lush fertile world with lakes and forests; Ocela, a seascape with volcanic islands, and several other locations and terrains. All of the art and models are inspired by renowned fantasy artist Rodney Mathews, and believe me when I say that the game looks *great*.





SHADOW MASTER






Actually great doesn't quite cover it. *Shadow Master* is the most graphically impressive 3D shooter yet seen on PS. Seriously. The *SM* engine is chucking around truckloads of beautifully modeled (and animated) polygon enemies inside huge detailed environments at upwards of 30fps (i.e.. the frame rate never drops below 30) with INSANE colored lighting effects and explosions from the gods. This is not just your regular eye candy. More like a 5-course eye banquet.

The gameplay is still coming together right now but you can rest assured the final version will feature fast and furious blasting action to compliment the visuals. Control of your buggy takes a bit of getting used (the momentum and low view are initially confusing) but with practice you'll soon be careening around levels reducing all opposition to scrap metal. Look for a full review next month. *K*

UPDATE

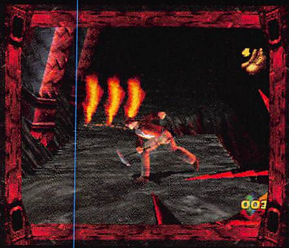
PlayStation

DEVELOPER - HAMMERHEAD
PUBLISHER - PSYGNOSIS
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - HARD
AVAILABLE - SOON!



KNIGHTMARE
Quake on wheels! Kind of...

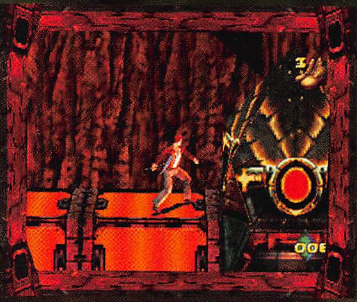






PITFALL 3D

The Legacy Continues in 3D!





Welcome to another installment of the unfolding drama that is Pitfall 3D, coming to you courtesy of Activision for the world's favorite box of chips, the Sony PlayStation. Updating the four-bit classic in true nineties style, this 3D action adventure game takes Harry to an hysterical new high.

This preview is based on a new three-level rev sent to us by Activision, dealing specifically with a hellish volcano area. Here, Harry must find and destroy lava extractors and pipe hubs, engage in mortal combat with scorpions and as-yet-untextured monsters, and avoid burning his tootsies off in all the molten lava flowing about. Dramatic camera angles and a well-animated hero lend a cinematic air to the proceedings. And as a true progeny of the 2600 classic, Harry does plenty of death-defying swinging throughout the surprisingly large and intricate levels with the aid of his trusty pick-axe. In its current state of development however, some frustrating collision issues make traversing said levels a little trickier than it should be, though I trust this will be addressed in these months leading up to the game's completion.

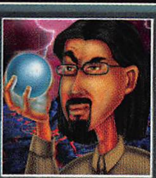
With massive boss encounters promised and 21 levels of running, leaping, attacking, swinging madness, Pitfall 3D could go a long way towards bolstering confidence in Activision's in-house console endeavors. As is our duty, we'll keep you posted on this game's progress. Will Activision be able to capture lightning twice? We shall see. ***SD***





P PREVIEW | PlayStation

DEVELOPER - ACTIVISION	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - ACTIVISION	DIFFICULTY - TBD
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - TBA



SUBSTANCE D
Look, it's Indiana Harry! Puh, puh, puh, pahhhhhhhh...







CART WORLDSERIES

CART fans rejoice... CART World Series, Sony's latest racing game, features the names, the teams, the tracks, the sounds, and the feel of the CART tour. Names like de Ferran, Zanardi, Rahal, and Unser. Teams like Newman-Haas and Patrick Racing. Tracks ranging from the deceptively oval Michigan Speedway to the hairpins and tight turns of Laguna Seca. Actual engine sounds sampled at varying speeds, crowd noises, pit chatter in the headset... Boy, the enhanced Rally Cross engine drivin' this game is really gettin' a workout!



4-PLAYER LINK-UP!!! (SPLIT SCREEN TIMES TWO...)





The most amazing thing I've noticed about CWS is the physics. I've always said that if a game's not frustrating, it's too easy. Believe me, that's not a problem here! Play this game in simulation mode, and you'll have one heck of a frustrating time trying to find that balance between speed and control. Analog control makes it much easier, as some of the slower, more obtuse turns can be quite tricky to figure out. Turn too sharp, and you're into the retaining wall and out of the race... I'm betting the control will be a bit less "slippery" in the final version, though.



One of the drawbacks to having such amazing physics, though, is the graphics. They aren't quite up to the visual standard set by Formula One, and you'll notice a bit of strange pop-up: The "racing line" tends to appear just ahead of you, while the rest of the track is already there. A small point, to be sure (it doesn't affect gameplay in the least), but odd...

Musically, well, it's actually pretty good, but then, I'm really picky when it comes to music, and I usually turn off the tunes in racing games anyway... The sound effects are great, though. Lots of tires screeching and engines whining, all done in amazing stereo. Who needs rear view mirrors when you can hear exactly where your opponents are? And if you hit the wall or another car and lose say, half the front wing, you'll hear the pit crew bark in your headset: "Come on in, we'll fix that..." (You want frustrating? Try driving one of these things with no front wing at all!!!)



All in all, CART World Series is shaping up to be quite a contender in the densely-populated PS racing genre. We'll have to wait till next month, though, for the final review. I'll be back after having (hopefully) beaten it into submission! (I've heard hints that there are "hidden" tracks that are well, not your ordinary bonus tracks... Let's just say there's more than one sci-fi fan on the CART team at Sony!) See you then! *R*





A DAY AT THE RACES...



Look! There's me!!!

ECM and I were invited to the new California Speedway by the kind folks at Sony, for the last round of the Indy Lights and the Marlboro 500. Thanks to Helene Sheeler from Sony for a fun day, and thanks to Kolbe Launchbaugh and Ken George for making great games (Rally Cross, CART, etc.)... Now, if only we could convince them to make a motocross game...

P PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - SCEA

PUBLISHER - SONY

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-4 (w/2 PLYR LINK)

DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED

AVAILABLE - BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS

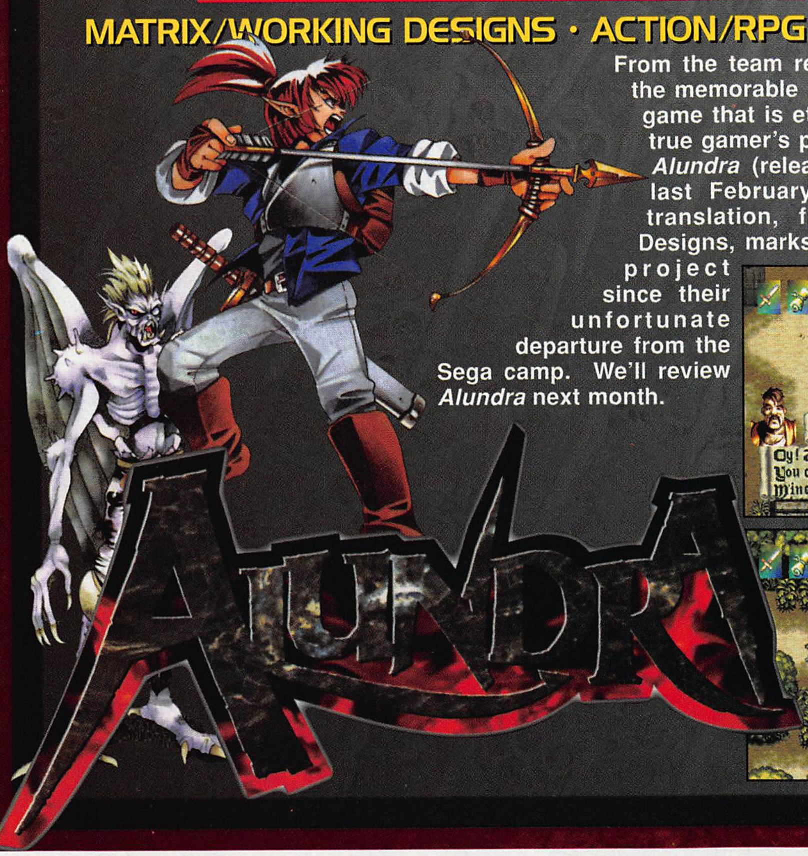


REUBUS
Pack your "Lunchbox" Ralphy, we're goin' to the track!

COMING SOON: PLAYSTATION

· Alundra ·

MATRIX/WORKING DESIGNS · ACTION/RPG · NOV.





From the team responsible for the memorable *LandStalker*, a game that is etched in every true gamer's psyche, comes *Alundra* (released in Japan last February). The U.S. translation, from Working Designs, marks their first PS project since their unfortunate departure from the Sega camp. We'll review *Alundra* next month.



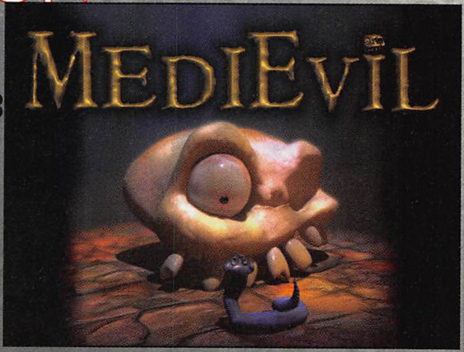






· MediEvil ·

MILLENNIUM/SONY · ACTION/ADVENTURE · 1ST Q. 98



Post-E3, I was asked by our Sony rep, "So whatja like at the show?" My answer: That game you had playing on one screen... *MediEvil*! *MediEvil*? Oh, OK, really? That's a Sony UK game, I'll check into it. Months later, here it is folks, on its way to American soil after receiving much acclaim at the recent ECTS (Hambleton picked it as game of show!). E. Storm called this one!

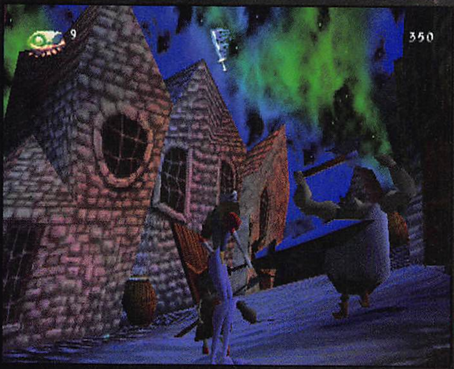
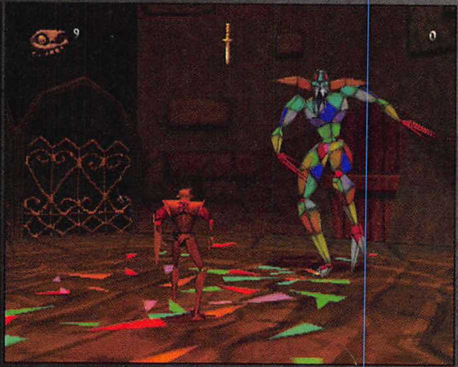
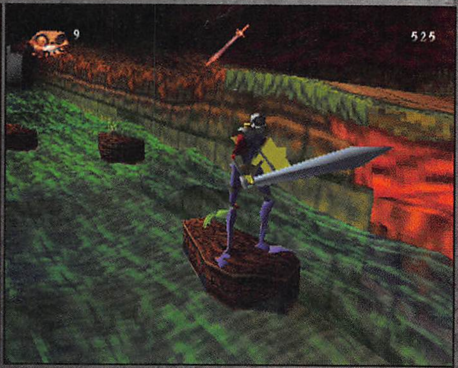
Think *Ghouls and Ghosts* meets *Dragon's Lair* in a real time 3D environment and you can imagine why I feel *MediEvil* has big potential. The game in motion is a sight indeed with eye-popping lighting, a respector frame rate and a spooky feel that you'll just love! We'll get *MediEvil* on your #%$ in the ensuing months!









COMING SOON: PLAYSTATION

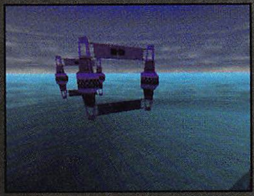
· Rapid Racer ·



SONY UK · RACING · TBA

Fully aware that too many racers is a bad thing, how about a speed boat racer that whisks along at a brisk 60 fps, has water effects that realistically effect your craft, and glistening lighting effects that will shock even the most hard to please racer? Seriously, if I saw this game in an arcade I'd dump money in and play all day! *Rapid Racer* is coming soon! Look for a hands on preview in the December issue!



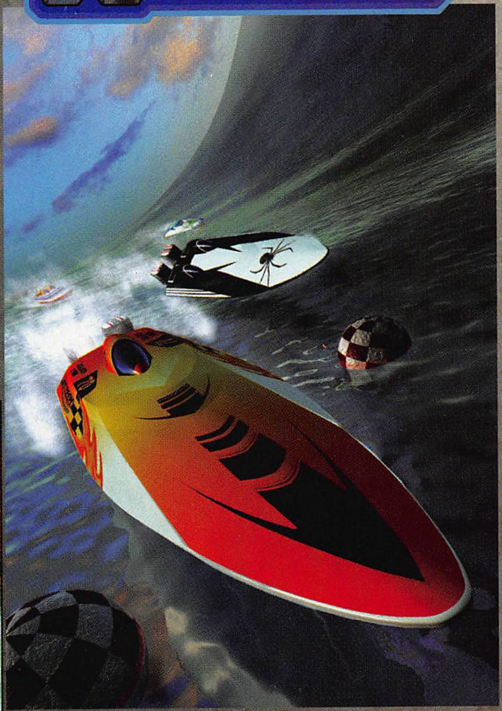








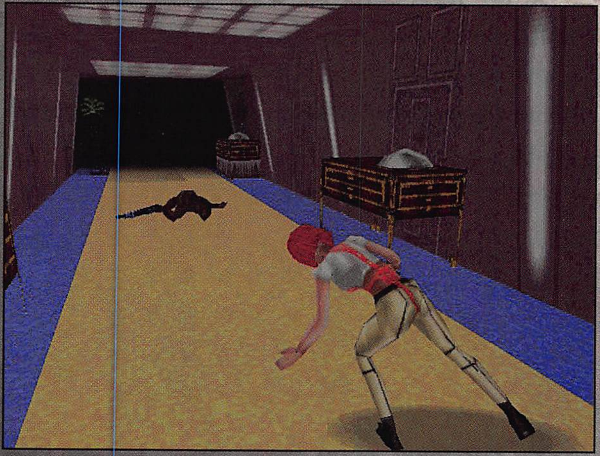
RAPID RACER



COMING SOON: PLAYSTATION



The respectable *Nightmare Creatures* engine is at work again in Kalisto's awesome 3D adaptation of the underrated sci-fi joy flick, *The 5th Element*. No word yet as to when it will be available Stateside or who will publish but it is looking quite spectacular. As usual a full report is coming your way.



· 5th Element ·

KALISTO · ACTION/ADVENTURE · TBA.







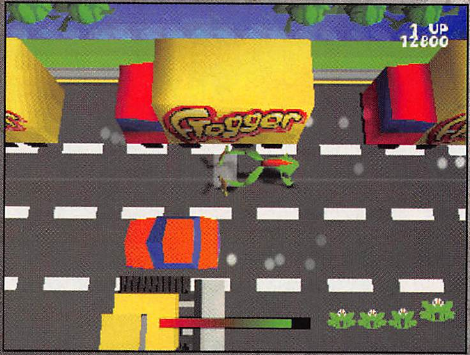


· Frogger ·

HASBRO INTERACTIVE · ACTION/ARCADE · NOV.



Close your eyes and journey back to a simpler time when fulfillment was as simple as hopping freely across highways and byways. The year... I dunno, it was a long time ago. The game... *Frogger*. All I know is that I played the doo-doo out of it on my 5200. In Hasbro's polygonal revival the play has remained the same but the levels are all grown up featuring layered playfields, long quests, and smooth gouraud-shaded environments. We'll review this all-new and certainly improved *Frogger* next month.

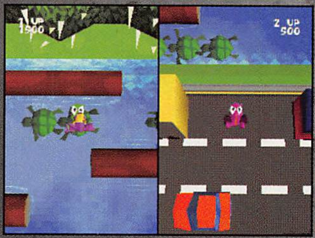


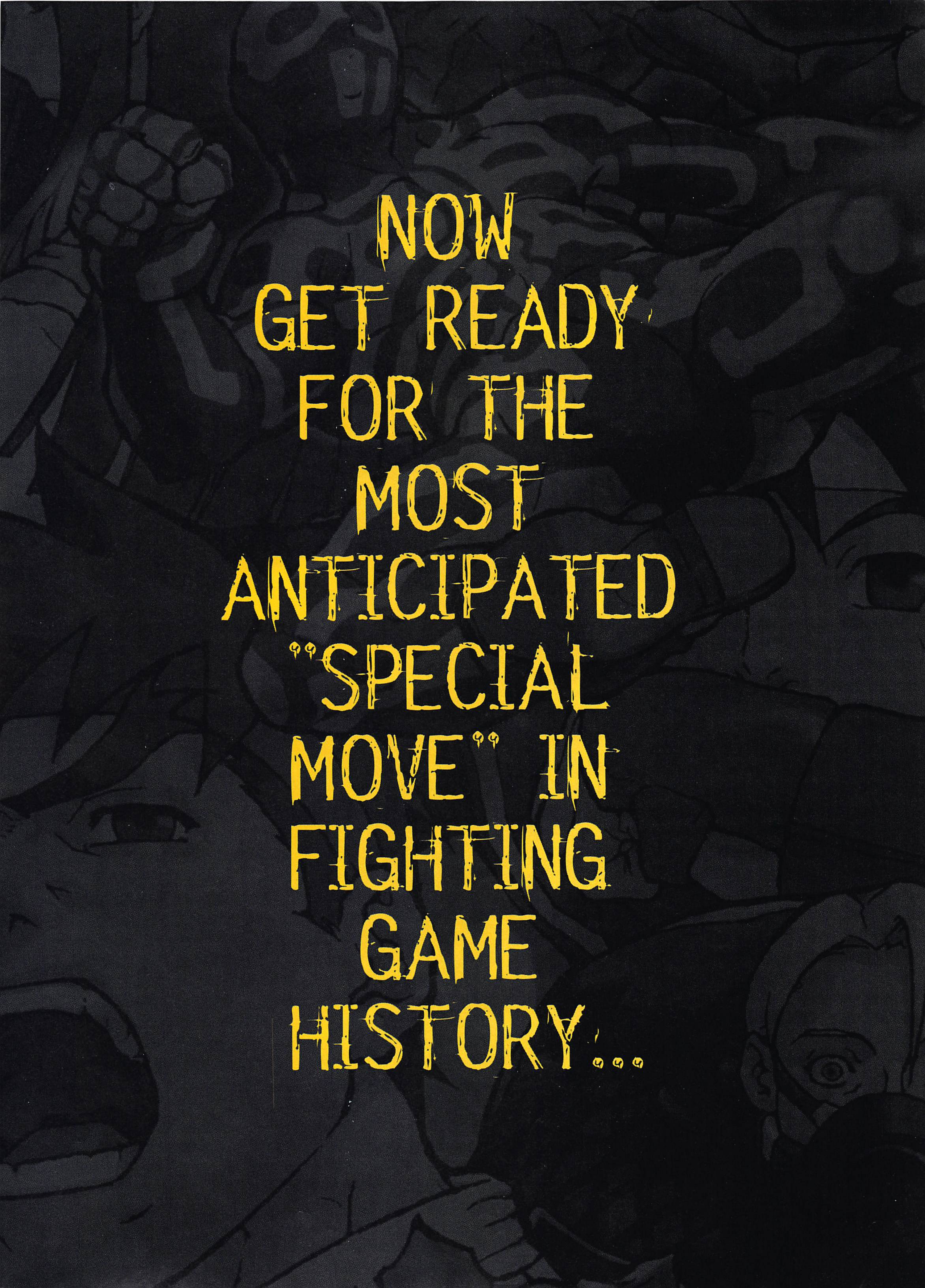
WE'LL, UH, DISSECT THE NEW FROGGER NEXT MONTH!










NOW
GET READY
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MOST
ANTICIPATED
"SPECIAL
MOVE" IN
FIGHTING
GAME
HISTORY...

STREET FIGHTER'S IN

3-D



Been missin' Street Fighter game-play? The world's premiere fighter goes kickin' and screamin' into 3-D. This beast pits the original 8 Street Fighter vets — Guile, Zangief, Ryu, Ken, Bison, Chun-Li, Dhalsim and Sakura in an amazing arcade hit. What else is the same? Signature Street Fighter gameplay. New? Lots! Crack your knuckles and welcome 12 all-new fighters in the biggest Street Fighter ever! Playable bosses, 7 different play modes, a total of 23 characters, this is the 3-D game worth fighting for...



TEEN
T
AGES 13+
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

PlayStation



STREET FIGHTER EX plus α ®
Ryu got your number? New Training Mode adds moves, reduces bruises.
New Multi-Hit combos bring 'em to their knees.
Slow Mo Replay makes victory even sweeter.
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COMING SOON: PLAYSTATION



Kronos' last fighter, *Dark Rift* (originally planned as a PS game), was pretty cool and now *Cardinal Syn* looks set to better it and become their finest effort yet. 18 selectable characters, dismemberment via finishing combos, real-time 3D environments, and full-on motion cap'ed animation should help bring the designers' vision of "ultimate sin" to life. Based on ancient clans and an archaic scripture, it's described as violent, seductive, and gory. Cool! We'll have a look next month.



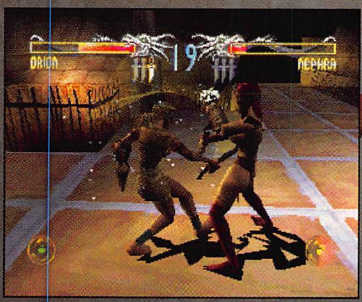
KRONOS IS PULLING OUT ALL THE STOPS IN THIS, THEIR THIRD FIGHTER IN AS MANY YEARS

· Cardinal Syn ·

KRONOS · FIGHTING · 4th Q.







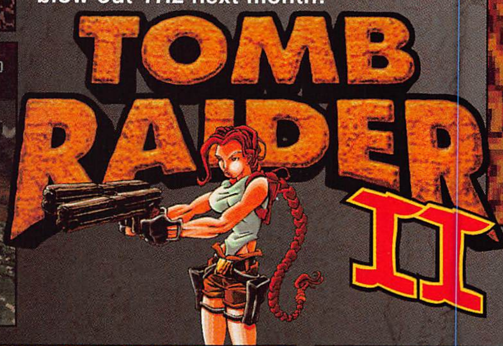
· Tomb Raider 2 ·

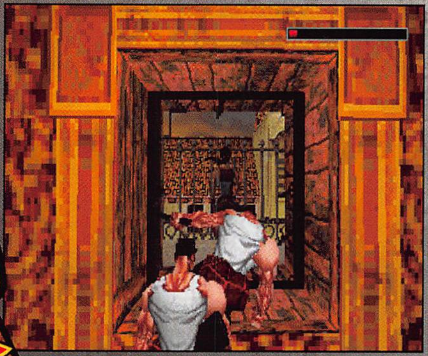
CORE/EIDOS · ACTION/ADVENTURE · NOV.



We've just begun reviewing the completed *TR2* and oh my, are you in for a shock! It turns out the preview versions were just that, as they were devoid of so much goodness! We'll blow out *TR2* next month!

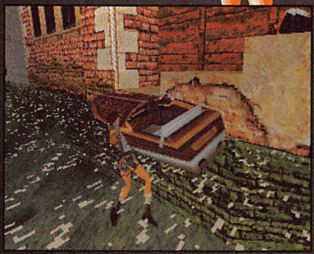






THE SHOT OF JUSTICE! THEN I (I MEAN SHE) DIED.










RESIDENT EVIL
DIRECTOR'S CUT
Now You Can See Resident Evil
Through The Director's Eyes.
Experience the director's original horrific vision. Presenting RESIDENT EVIL DIRECTOR'S CUT™ – the uncensored, unrelenting version of the CONSUMER'S CHOICE OVERALL "BEST-PLAYSTATION GAME." Substantially enhanced with frightfully graphic footage, alternate camera angles and new levels of difficulty. Resident Evil Director's Cut. It's a sight for sore eyes.
RESIDENT EVIL
DIRECTOR'S CUT
PlayStation
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CAPCOM
Includes the drop-dead RESIDENT EVIL II interactive demo.
PLUS A $5.00 COUPON towards its purchase.

· FF Tactics ·



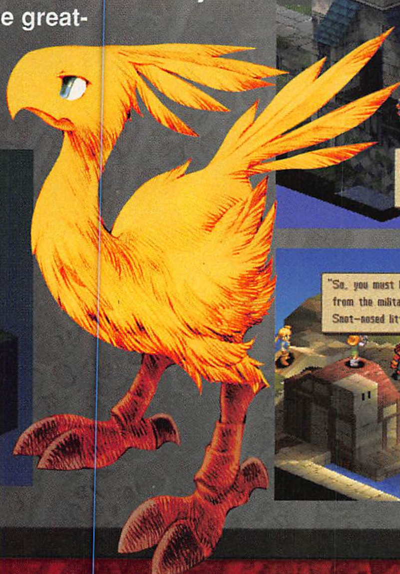
SQUARE · STRAT./RPG · JAN.

Tactics is early into the localization process, but already it appears that the ace translators at Square are working towards a straight port, with no changes! This is great news, indeed. It appears Sony actually respects the intelligence of the US gamer and is finally giving us what we want. We'll be back with more, MUCH MORE, in the December issue. All I can say for now is that this is perhaps the greatest strategy RPG yet conceived. Hang tight, this one's gonna be intense...



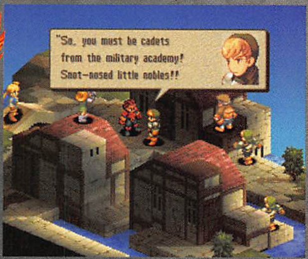






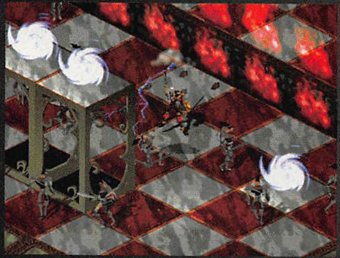






· Elric ·

PSYGNOSIS · ACTION/ADVENTURE · WINTER





Yyrkoon, (Elric's cousin) and Balo have attacked Melnibone and snatched Cymoril. After laying her in a coffin and throwing away the 7 sections of the cross carved in it, it is now up to Elric to traverse seven treacherous regions, fight hordlings of drooling creatures and collect the seven parts, in order to free his beloved (better bring some perfume; she'll be quite stinky!). Elric's a versatile hero (who, uh, looks a bit like our friend Kain) who can run, jump, cling, parry, use magic, and fight with his sword. As you can see, the spells are majestic and the artwork, spectacular! I could go on and on about the AI, 44 different types of monsters, and the deep themes in *Elric* but these morsels must be saved for a time when I actually get to play the game. The PS version is underway (it's currently headed towards both PC and PS) and should be in our hands soon.

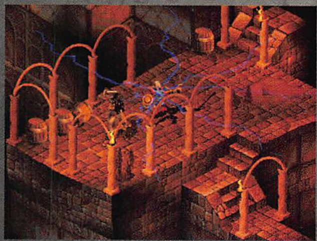


PAINSTAKINGLY DETAILED ENVIRONMENTS!










ID
EGO
Satisfy all your needs, wants and...
Descend into the all new psychotic world of Pandemonium 2 and twist reality inside out. Explore a whacked-out psychedelic landscape with Nikki's insane double jump–then dominate with Fargus' maniacal attacks by hurling his viper-tongued side-kick Sid for skull crushing good times. Navigate the undulating 3D hyper-kinetic backgrounds 'till it turns your brain to puddin'. Hey...it's a twisted new world of furious gameplay that'll devour you before you truly understand it. So have a good trip.
Pilot a giant mech through warped 3D tunnels.
Fargus is a raving maniac prone to light fires now and ask questions later.
Nikki–equipped with powers
that only big bad girls have.
PlayStation
RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Call 1.800.771.3772 for Game Rating Information
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COMING SOON: PLAYSTATION

· Spawn The Eternal ·

SONY · ACTION/ADVENTURE · DEC.

Thanks to some last minute Fed Ex action, *Spawn* showed up to just in time to top off a brilliant set of November PS Previews. Having come extremely far since we last played it, the game's fighting engine is now extremely fluid and features a fully functional cape and chains! The combos are in place along with a host of both beautifully-lit offensive and defensive spells. The adventure modes are









super smooth and contain some respectable textures and vivid lighting, although Spawn himself looks a touch blocky (we're still pre-beta though). Also notable is the intense animated sky overhead—quite impressive.

We'll go in to more detail in next month's full blown update.

















REVIEW

NINTENDO 64

- DEVELOPER - HUDSON
- PUBLISHER - NINTENDO
- FORMAT - CART
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-4
- DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
- AVAILABLE - 4TH QUARTER



GLITCH

This game *is* da **BOMB** yo!



Yes, *BomberMan* on the N64! I'm GF's self-appointed (well, they know it) *BomberMan* pro, and I think *BomberMan 64* is an awesome addition to the series. Mind you, this ain't your momma's *BomberMan*, but it'll do just fine. I'll explain everything...

BomberMan 64 (known in Japan as *Baku BomberMan 64*) is a branching-off of sorts for the series. Just like a *MegaMan X*, or an *SF Alpha*, *BomberMan 64* takes a classic series into new territory. The *Baku* tag means 'explosive' or 'louder', and indeed, it is!

BM64 has excellent multi-player modes, which we'll touch on later, but look for the meat 'n potatoes in the Story Mode. It's a long, four-world, 12-stage, action puzzle-fest, complete with mid-boss breaks once every stage, and hard-core end bosses (see the handy Boss Breakdown for details). To beat each level properly, you'll have to kill 30 enemies, then find Gold Cards which will appear somewhere ultra-covert. You'll need bombs for this, after all, what else are you going to





clear the screen with? Bomb power-ups include the standard Blue Bomb, pick up more and you'll drop more; the Red Bomb, which breaks through stone (where many cool items are hidden, like Gold Cards), and the Remocon Bomb, a manually-triggered remote bomb.

Bombs fit into the plan in other ways too. To successfully maneuver the multi-layered 3D environments, you'll need another way to reach platforms: Bomb Towers. Simply drop a few bombs down beneath a ledge and fall down right on top of them. See that? You bounce! Using Bomber's moves, the kick and throw, you can set up the coolest stacks to leap across giant gaps. Try it once and you're hooked! Your bombs' size can also be pumped-up (just hold 'em and tap 'A'), making for some large, gratifying stacks—literally bomb bridges. You can spin the camera 360˚ too, so don't worry about aiming your jumps...all you need for that is skill.

There's also bomb power-upgrades, gem stones, and secret Custom parts. Power-upgrades pump up the size and destructive power of bombs, and since *BM64*'s explosions are polygonal and circular (like those in *Virtual On*), you can blow up many an obstacle or enemy once you've sufficiently powered up. Gem Stones come in Red and Blue—Red's worth five, and Blue counts as one. Rack up fifty gems and you'll earn an extra continue. The Custom parts come in Red, Green, Yellow, and Blue, representing Head, Body, Arm, and Foot. Each part enhances a certain facet of Bomber's actions, such as increasing his throw power, speed, and kick power. Best of all, these parts can only be used in the multi-player modes. In other words, if you're truly hard-core and find parts in the Story Mode on your own, there's a good chance you'll be kicking ass in the multi-player modes! That rocks!



Play against skilled opponents in the Multiplayer Mode and you'll see the gameplay evolve. As emphasized in the Story Mode, this is not a *BomberMan* clone. Multiplayer is the same, drawing on the gameplay elements available. And with the Custom Parts feature, it's easy to see that Hudson wants you to go back and forth between the two modes. There's the regular Battle game, which is every man for himself, and there's Team Battle, a 2-on-2 game where the object is to destroy the other team's randomly-placed stone gem. And in *BomberMan* tradition, each arena has unique last-minute perils, such as meteor showers, disappearing platforms, and sandwiching walls.



As I run out of space, I'll tell ya' that *BM64*'s controls are tight (analog tight, as a matter 'o fact), the polygonal graphics are great (even with slight frame rate stuttering), and the music is excellent, Hudson happiness. A good little package! So what if *BomberMan 64* breaks from convention? It's a great one-player game and easily among the best multi-player games on the system. *G*



In Racing There Is
Only One Position
NINTENDO64
Only For
"An F1 simulation with no equal!"
- GameFan Magazine
"...exceptional frames of animation..."
- EGM2
F1 POLE POSITION 64
16 Tracks, 22 Drivers, 11 cars...
Pure Pulse-Pounding Formula One Action!
NINTENDO64
KIDS TO ADULTS
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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enemy airplanes



air support



ground support



sea support



su - 33 super flanker



fsx



a - 10 thunderbolt ii



f - 14b tomcat



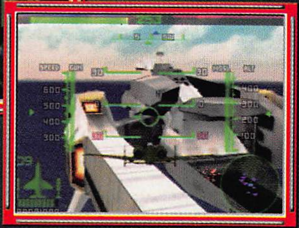
Know this. We were expecting something pretty damn devastating from Paradigm. These were the guys responsible for *Pilotwings 64*, the single most fun you can have in the skies. We learned many months ago about their new baby; a 64-bit equivalent of *Ace Combat 2*. We were very excited. We played *Ace Combat 2*, loved it to bits, and waited for a game with faster, more diverse planes, phenomenal control and slick 60 fps intense dogfighting action. These were the *Pilotwings* people, doing an arcade air-sim! We were champing at the bit to fly another one of their airborne classics! Then *Aero Fighters* arrived with a wet, dull thud.

Fresh and back from the ECTS, I discovered a copy of *Aero Fighters* on my desk. I was ecstatic, and not a little puzzled. Why hadn't Knightmare grabbed this one for himself? How kind! I slapped in my cartridge, donned my goggles and tried to think of more airborne witticisms for my review.









AEROFIGHTERS ASSAULT



ellen: hq operator



city



desert



I didn't need to bother. Why waste time on well thought out prose when the game's as shocking as this one? Ladies and gentlemen, I give you 64-bit: A frame rate creeping into the teens, slowing to treacle-tastic proportions when anything even resembling an explosion occurs. Purely arcade style flying with the emphasis definitely on the action aspect (which would be fine if the game wasn't so damn slow—I can't bear to think how fast the PAL version's gonna be!). There's some truly third rate blurry floor textures when you're viewing them up close. Head-wrenchingly shallow gameplay. Head-twitchingly poor voice samples from you and your CPU autopilot ("Whoa, dude! Gnarly!") as your plane hurtles into the earth. Just a personal gripe, but I HATE INANE BUDDY TALK!! And to complete this airborne turkey, we have a control system so shockingly unlike real flying, you have to wonder if Paradigm sacked those responsible for *Pilotwings* and bought in a team of vertigo-sufferers. There's no friction between you and the plane; you're able to pull all sorts of impossible stunts (like multiple loop-the-loops) without breaking a sweat. Then there's the incoming planes to shoot a payload of missiles at. Wait for the red target box. Fire. Chug through the explosion. Wait for red target box. Fire. Chug through explosion. Wait for Boss to arrive. Wait for lots of red target boxes. Fire. Pause the game. Cry in penniless grief.

But hey, the textures aren't pixelly! There's some great music (if you're a fan of slap synth bass that is; I thought that sound had died with *Level 42*), and some of the graphical effects (such as the smoke trails) are pretty cool. But I was lost in a swamp of low frame rates, poor CPU intelligence (at least to begin with) and that repetitive gameplay which I criticized *Ace Combat 2* for. I could imagine some people liking this offering (hell, *Cruis'n USA* was top of the charts for weeks!), but for me, I like realism in my flying games, and sadly, this didn't make my flying grade. Delete your *Pilotwings* medals and hop into the hang-glider again... ***CH***

R REVIEW

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - PARADIGM

PUBLISHER - VIC TOKAI

FORMAT - CARTRIDGE

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

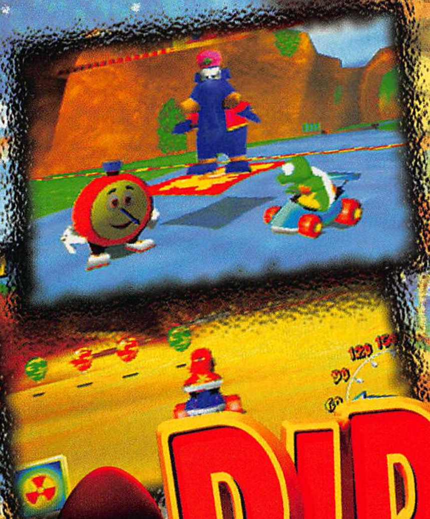
DIFFICULTY - MEDIUM

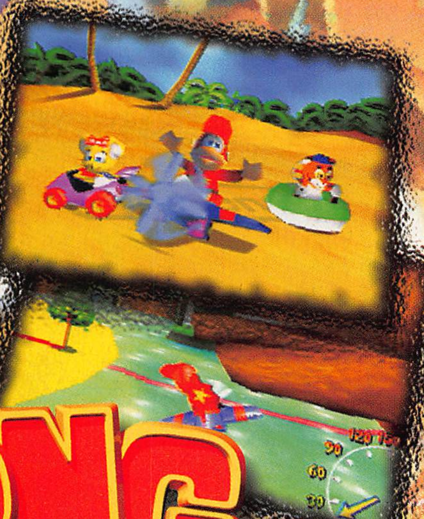
AVAILABLE - NOW



CHIEF HAMBLETON
Like wading through treacle... only not as sweet...

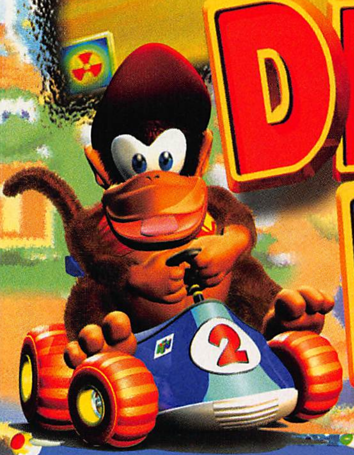

"This could be THE driving game of the year."
Q64
NINTENDO64
GRAB THE BULL BY THE HORNS.
Get a grip on a 12-cylinder tornado for the redline racing experience that's gonna shred your N64!
6 tortuous, high-resolution tracks. 4 modes of turbocharged racing perfection.
A stable of ultimate racing machines. And the Lamborghini Diablo.
Welcome to the velocity convention.
Your bull is waiting.
Lamborghini™ "64"
Visionary lighting effects and revolutionary graphics!
Strategic camera angles that catch every hair-raising turn!
Compatible with N64 Rumble Pak–feel the road in your bones.
1 to 4 player racing with horizontal and split screen options
Lamborghini 64
KIDS TO ADULTS
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
TITUS





Judging by the way Mario Kart 64 has clung to the number one spot of our Readers Top Ten list for the past six months, I think it's safe to assume that NCL's combat/racer is fairly popular among the gaming community. Rare seems to think so, too. That's why their latest N64 title, Diddy Kong Racing, bears more than a passing resemblance to Miyamoto's kart classic.

DIDDY KONG RACING











Now, I love MK64 as much as the next man (or woman!), but you've got to admit, it had some serious flaws. The slowdown in 4-player mode is distracting; the CPU AI is super cheap; you can only race a trophy cup with 2 players; and perhaps worst of all, the weapons system is frustratingly unbalanced (being last is actually an advantage). Well, kart fans, you'll be glad to know that Diddy Kong Racing fixes ALL of these problems and more besides. Interested? You should be...

The first thing to hit you when you power up DKR is the quality of the graphics. If you thought Mario Kart 64 looked good, prepare yourself for a multi-colored visual assault of epic proportions! In DKR everything is 3D, even the racers, eliminating the jerky sprite rotation of MK64 and allowing for some truly spectacular lighting and camera effects. Rare uses the Lost World technique of wrapping the textures around the models for a smoother look, and for once in an N64 game the textures are of a high enough quality to survive the mip-mapping process and still look crisp and vibrant. There is an occasional frame rate hiccup (a drop from the usual 30 to around 20/25) but it never gets so bad that the game becomes unplayable. The music and sound effects are also pretty cool—an eclectic mix of whimsical tunes and cute samples that perfectly suit DKR's cartoony atmosphere.

Start a new game and after picking your driver from a selection of 8 (plus a couple of hidden) Rare characters, you are given a choice of two main







R REVIEW

NINTENDO64

DEVELOPER - RARE	# OF PLAYERS - 1 TO 4
PUBLISHER - NINTENDO	DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED
FORMAT - 128 MEG CART	AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER



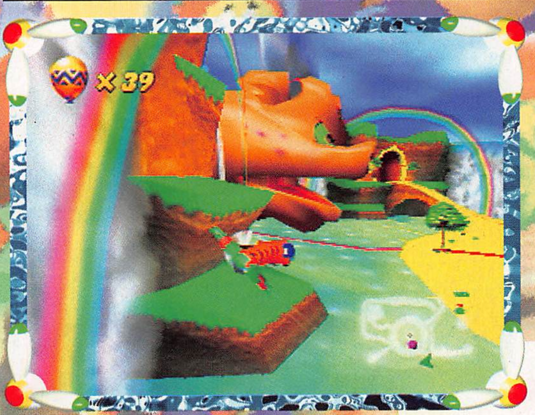
KNIGHTMARE
DKR is a *Mario Kart 64* beater!

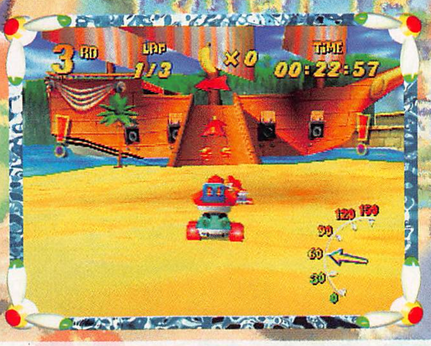


• • WEAPONS • •

As you drive around the track you will notice a number of colored balloons in fixed locations. These balloons are your power-ups and by touching one you will collect the power-up associated with that color. Red, for example, gives you missiles, while blue gives you a turbo boost. By storing and repeatedly collecting balloons of the same color you can increase the effect of your power-up. Collect two red balloons and you have a homing missile. Collect three and you get a barrage of ten regular missiles!



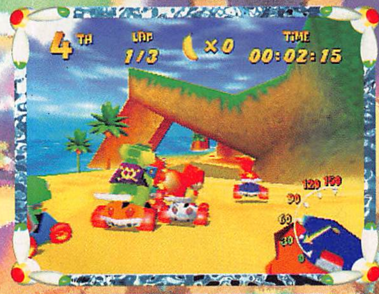






game options: Adventure or Tracks. Tracks lets you instantly race any of the game's 25+ tracks (or group of tracks in a trophy race) with up to four players simultaneous. Adventure, on the other hand, is the single player quest mode—with 'quest' being the operative word. This isn't just a series of cup races like Mario Kart 64—this is a full blown Mario 64-style adventure!







Starting off in the middle of a fully realized 3D world, you are free to explore the landscape at your leisure, using one of three different vehicles (kart, hovercraft or plane) to reach different areas. Located around the world are four themed 'hubs' (forest, water, winter and desert) each containing four tracks, a boss and a special challenge stage. Just like Mario 64, you select the track you want to race by driving through its door (like jumping through a painting) and just like Mario 64, certain tracks require you to collect a specific amount of gold balloons (instead of stars) before they can be accessed. Some balloons can be found just lying around the island, but for the most part you're going to have to earn them by finishing first in a race.

The first time you actually enter a track and race, you can't help but notice the similarities to MK64. DKR 'borrows' (perhaps unavoidably) a host of genre-standard features such as turbo starts, a 3-lap structure, "zippers" on the track that give your vehicle a boost, even bananas which let you go faster the more you collect (like MK64's coins). However, the addition of two extra vehicles significantly changes the nature of the action. While the kart may handle like a cross between Super Mario Kart and Mario Kart 64 (MK64-style analog steering with SMK-style power-sliding), the hovercraft and

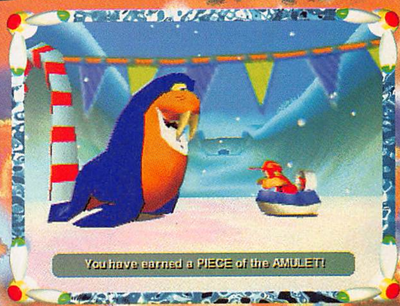


IT'S BANJO!



• • BOSSES • •

Every hub has a main boss, who can only be faced once you have placed first on all four of the tracks in that hub. Defeat the boss and he sets a challenge for you: Return to that hub's four tracks and come first again, this time collecting 8 silver N64 coins in each race! Succeed in this task and you must face the boss a second time, where he is much harder. Defeat him again and a piece of the Wiz Pig amulet is yours. Collect all four pieces from all four bosses and face the game's final boss: the fearsome Wiz Pig!



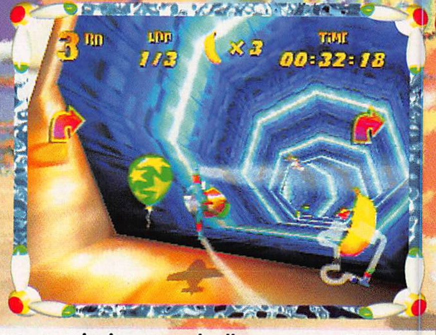


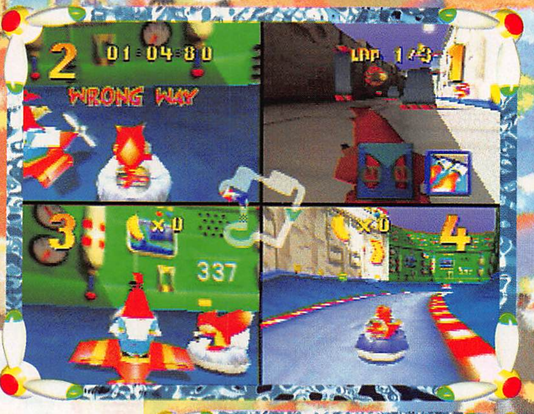
• • CHALLENGE KEYS • •

Each hub has a special key, hidden somewhere in one of the four main tracks, which will unlock the door to that hub's special challenge stage. These challenges are always directly competitive matches against the other racers and range from out-and-out battle modes (a la Mario Kart) to a bizarre plane sub-game where you must collect eggs and return them to your area to hatch. Once you have beaten a sub-game you are given a piece of the Tic-Toc amulet. The challenge also appears on your 'tracks' screen and can be played multiplayer.











plane are a whole new ball game. Certain tracks are tailor-made specifically for certain vehicles (sometimes more than one) and each vehicle has its own distinct style of control.

The mechanics for all the vehicles are fairly simple to get to grips with (much simpler than MK64), which is a good thing as the game gets pretty difficult later on, particularly on some of the bosses (this is Rare, after all!). But even when the going gets tough, the CPU AI is always fair. Certain characters will do better on certain tracks than others, and they all drive at their own set pace WITHOUT CHEATING (take note, NCL!).

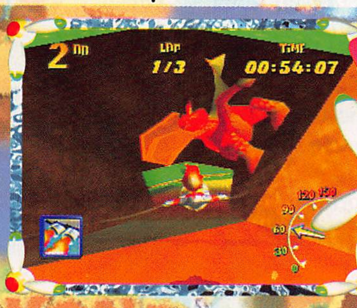
As cool as the single player mode is (and it is very cool), a title like DKR depends on its multiplayer game for long term survival. And thankfully, once again, Rare has delivered the goods. Having different players select different vehicles on the same track adds a huge element of replayability (not to mention un-predictability) and Rare has balanced each track specifically to be fair for all vehicles. You can race a trophy cup with any number of players, including CPU opposition, and the frame rate is (for the most part) excellent, even when in four-player split-screen mode.

So is it better than Mario Kart 64? In my opinion: yes. Although I miss the staggered power sliding of MK64, Diddy Kong Racing is simply superior in almost every category. It's fun, it's challenging, it's delightful—it's a must-buy for every N64 owner (like you weren't going to buy it anyway!). Blast Corps, GoldenEye, and now Diddy Kong Racing. Rare is on a roll! I can't wait for Banjo Kazooie. K



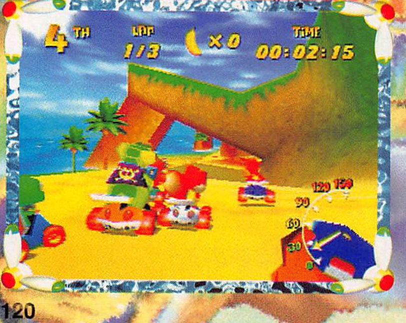












• • TROPHY RACE • •

Every hub has a trophy room where you can access that hub's trophy race. A trophy race is where you race each of the hub's four tracks in sequence, accumulating points from your finishing position, just like Mario Kart's GP mode. Finish first overall to win the gold trophy. Collect gold trophies from all four hubs and you will unlock a secret that is 'out of this world'. Heh heh.

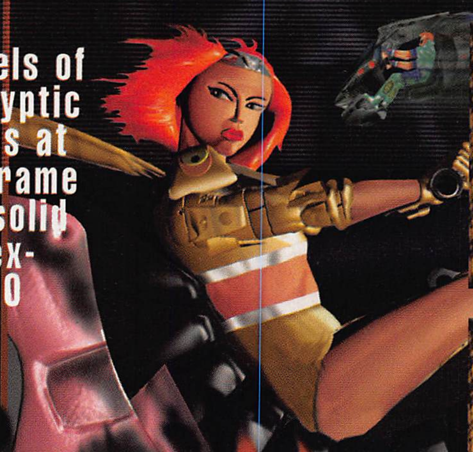




"SAY HELLO TO MY LITTLE FRIENDS"
AEROFIGHTERS ASSAULT™
YOU WANT TO BE A HERO? DOGFIGHT BOGIES AND BOSSES OR GO HEAD-TO-HEAD IN TWO-PLAYER COMBAT IN STUNNING GRAPHIC ENVIRONMENTS TO SAVE THE EARTH YET AGAIN. THERE ARE 10 LEVELS OF FAST ACTION THAT DEMAND FAST REACTION. JOIN THE BATTLE IN THE ONLY GAME THAT MATTERS.
KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Designed For N64 Rumble Pak™
NINTENDO64
VIDEO SYSTEM
PARADIGM ENTERTAINMENT
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"...15+ levels of post apocalyptic action...runs at a dazzling frame rate, with solid blur-free textures and NO FOG."











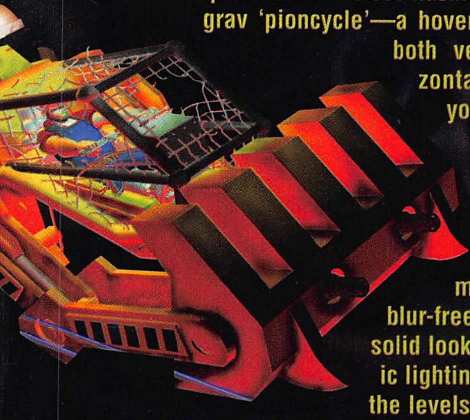




While Acclaim was visiting our offices this month, they were kind enough to grant us our first look at the N64 version of their forthcoming 3D shooter, *Forsaken*. Although the game is still pretty early in development (even earlier than the PS version) with only one playable level and no enemies, the engine was running smoothly, and, much to our surprise, the multiplayer game was in and functioning.

Obviously 'influenced' by Parallax Software's *Descent*, *Forsaken* is a 360-degree, first-person shooter that casts you as a futuristic scavenger who has returned to earth ten years after a fusion reaction reduced the planet to a lifeless husk. Using your anti-grav 'pioncycle'—a hover bike capable of both vertical and horizontal movement—you must scour through 15+ levels of post-apocalyptic action, collecting loot and laying waste to any gene-mutants or rival scavengers foolish enough to cross your path.

The N64 version of *Forsaken* is being developed by a division of Iguana UK, and if this pre-alpha is anything to go by, they're doing a bang up job. In single player mode the game runs at a dazzling frame rate, with solid blur-free textures and NO FOG. The environments are incredibly solid looking and benefit from some particularly impressive dynamic lighting effects. The 3D design of the levels is initially confusing (there is no 'right' way up) but once you get the hang of thinking in 3D it adds a new dimension to the usual corridor blasting action. Control of the bike is straightforward and easy to master (the analog stick points, the buttons move), although the strafing is currently pretty useless. This may sound like a small complaint but it actually reduces combat to a basic point and shoot affair. Please fix it, Acclaim! We'll have more next month. *K*



THREE'S COMPANY, FOUR'S A DEATHMATCH!

As I mentioned before, *Forsaken* 64 already features a four player, split screen, multiplayer mode with each window retaining a surprisingly smooth frame rate (although each view is through a slight fish eye lens). The cycle models are cool (you can clearly make out the character riding), and Acclaim promises a healthy gore content for the finished version. You want to see severed limbs floating through zero G? This is the place! (pictures below)





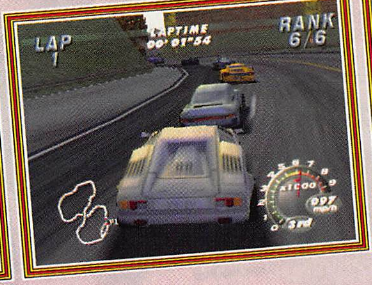
PREVIEW	DEVELOPER - IGUANA	# OF PLAYERS - 1-4
NINTENDO 64	PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM	DIFFICULTY - UNKNOWN
	FORMAT - CARTRIDGE	AVAILABLE - SPRING '98

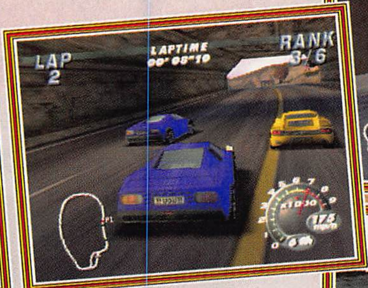


KNIGHTMARE
It's Descent on a hover-bike. With gibs!

Italian Sports Cars...



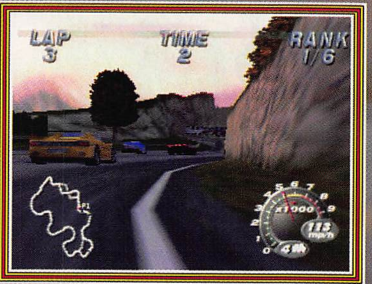
















Attention speeders, lead-foots, and the uninsurable: we've just received a near final version of Titus' Lamborghini 64 (just renamed Automobili Lamborghini), and if you crave manic speed and breathtaking visuals, here's your game. Featuring Italy's finest (well, Ferrari may disagree, but they don't have their own game, do they?) cruising across numerous tracks battlin' it out for first place, it's a duel to see who can manage the longest between pit stops, hanging tight as your tires melt away.

The graphics in this game are truly inspired, featuring some of the best texture mapping yet seen on the console while

Lamborghini 64

maintaining a smooth solid 30 FPS. The array of cars including a Viper, Porsche, and NSX lookalikes (although they aren't labeled as such) are modeled perfectly.

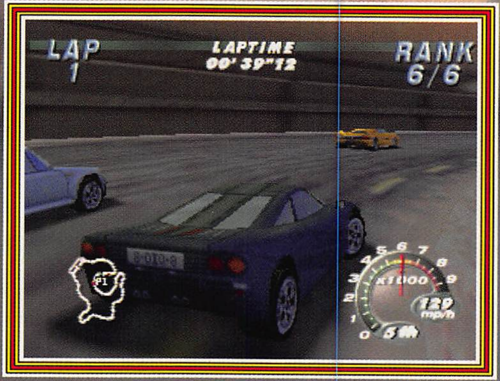
With barely a hint of clipping (you have to search for the slightest li'l flick) this is one of the nicest racing engines we've seen on the console. The sound effects are solid and mimic the real thing down to the tail pipe—at least as far as I can remember (mine's been in the shop for awhile). The music too is quite good, especially given the number of cars and effects (lens flares shoot out of every crevice) on screen. After Cruisin' and Rush, this is like a symphony.

The analog control is solid, and feels tight. The car turns when you want it to, and doesn't slide uncharacteristically. In fact, this game may feature the best analog control this side of Mario Kart. I guess AL64 shouldn't come as that much of a shock. The last Titus game I played (Prehistorik Man on the SNES) was fantastic as well, with similar attention to detail. They definitely take their time but the payoff is well worth the wait.

If this is any inclination of Titus' dedication to the platform, and I'm sure it is, Superman: The Animated Series is going to be truly memorable. We'll review Automobili Lamborghini next month. In the meantime, better go pay all those tickets, you're gonna need room in the glove box. *ECM*

Takin' it to the Streets!!!





PREVIEW

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - TITUS	# OF PLAYERS - 1-4
PUBLISHER - TITUS	DIFFICULTY - AVERAGE
FORMAT - CARTRIDGE	AVAILABLE - 4TH QTR



ECM
Pay off your speeding tickets, cuz you're gonna need room for more...


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BLUE IS BACK AGAIN!

SONIC R

It's taken a while, but Sega has finally cottoned on to the fact that cartoon racers are somewhat popular in the Western hemisphere right now. *Mario Kart 64* sold truckloads and *Diddy Kong Racing* looks set to do the same (and rightly so, I might add). So, not wanting to get left behind, Sega has dropped their key mascot and several of his pals (and enemies) into a racing game set in the *Sonic* universe. Original? No. Cool? Yes!

Ignore any flashbacks you might be having of *Sonic Drift* (the Game Gear *Sonic Kart* racing game)—*Sonic R* is the real deal. Developed by Travelers Tales in the UK (responsible for the so-so *Sonic 3D Blast*), *Sonic R* is a graphically stunning, racing/exploration game that can best be described as a cross between *Running Wild* and the *Sonic World* section of *Sonic Jam*. Choose from one of five different *Sonic* characters (Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Amy and Dr. Robotnik) then race around a number of themed tracks based on existing *Sonic* levels (the track count is yet to be finalized) in an attempt to become the fastest critter on Moebius.

The preview version that we received featured all five characters and three tracks: Green Hill Zone, City and Factory (though we know of two more: The Ruins and Chaos). This may not sound like a lot of tracks but bear in mind that a) there will probably be more in the final and b) each track is a mini-world in itself. Although each course has a main path to follow, there are countless short cuts that can be taken and every character possesses a special ability that allows them to take different routes (see the box out). It's quite possible to race an entire track without ever seeing your opposition!







RACE AROUND MOEBIUS!

Now, what would a Sonic game be without rings or power-ups? Nothing, I tell you! That's why *Sonic R* is positively littered with both of the above. Power-ups come in the form of ring clusters, power sneakers and a fire shield that attracts rings to you like a magnet (though it goes out if you jump in the water). Rings, on the other hand, are often found in long lines and be can be used in a number of different ways. For instance, some courses feature a zipper built into the track surface that gives the racer a massive speed boost in exchange for rings. The more rings you have, the longer the boost. Also, each course has a number of short cuts hidden behind a special gate that can only be opened if you hold the correct number of rings.

Graphically, *Sonic R* already looks fantastic, with detailed courses, clean textures and an amazing '12 layer transparency' engine which cleverly disguises pop-up by fading in the track ahead in multiple stages (who says Saturn can't do transparency). At the moment the control mechanics seem a little bit awkward, especially for a *Sonic* game, but I'm sure that will be fixed in the final version. Look for more on this one soon. K









HIDDEN STUFF





On top of the regular 'beat-the-clock' racing, *Sonic R* features a load of periphery sub-quests that the more experienced gamer can attempt. Hidden around each track are a Chaos Emerald and 5 secret gold coins. Like *Diddy Kong Racing*, players are required to locate the Chaos Emerald and collect all 5 gold coins and still come first. No mean feat!









MEET THE GANG





Each of the five characters in *Sonic R* has his own specific abilities and modes of transportation. Amy drives a cute little car that turns into a boat on water; Robotnik pilots a hover-ship and can throw bombs at other racers; Knuckles can glide huge distances; Tails can fly for a short period of time and Sonic can double jump.

P PREVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - TRAVELERS TALES	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - SEGA	DIFFICULTY - N/A
FORMAT - 1 CD	AVAILABLE - WINTER

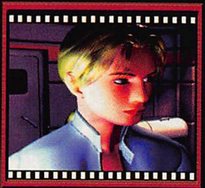


KNIGHTMARE
Where's Robo-Sonic, dammit?!









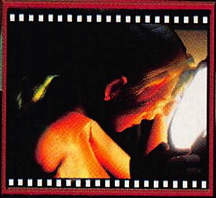
ENEMY ZERO

Isn't this refreshing? A really good SOJ title is being brought to the States, in a fairly timely fashion (hey, it's been worse!) with generous care and detail. *Enemy Zero* is being handled professionally by Sega of America, in every aspect, including the hiring of Luscious Jackson's Jill Cunniff to portray the main character, Laura. The *Eo* package will be comprised of a whopping 3 gameplay discs and one supplementary disc, called "Disc 0" (*Opening Disc*, containing game information and Training). What does it all mean for you and I? Many hours of high, high-quality FMV and brilliant game direction... from Japan's best.

Enemy Zero, the follow up to Warp's previous FMV/CG extravaganza, *D*, is the result of a close partnership between Warp and Sega. So close, that *Eo* remained a Saturn exclusive from its inception. *Eo* combines two very different, yet surprisingly effective mediums of presentation. The more prolific of the pair being FMV (hence the 3 discs) and the lesser being real-time 3D *Doom*-type areas, of polygonal construction. The plot is a beautifully woven tapestry of intrigue and suspense, divvied into balanced proportions through the two styles of gameplay.

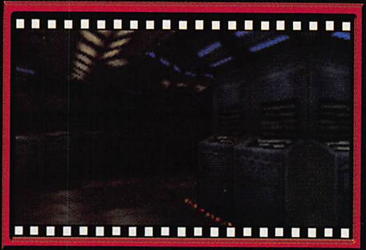
In the FMV scenes, you'll witness spectacular CG animations, intense with drama, yet subtly artistic. Laura sparkles with humanity as she explores rich, complex environments, all the while divulging the compelling storyline. In the real-time polygonal scenes you'll travel through a huge network of tunnels connecting the FMV rooms to one another. The 3D engine is smooth, despite some intrusive fade-in (Laura needs contacts or something), and there's a decent amount of variety in the textures and scenery. It's also here that invisible enemies appear (or not, doh!) and attack. It's your job to hunt 'em down, relying on sound alone. The manic "Bleep! Bleep!" of the enemy locator gets faster and faster, louder and louder, as your invisible foe approaches... tense, like the Motion Tracker in *AVP*... enough to drive the sanest of individuals (which I am not, hee hee!) into a panic-stricken frenzy!

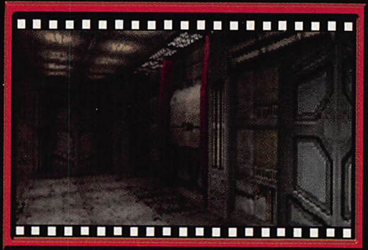
Whoa, this page went fast. We should have a reviewable *Enemy Zero* next issue, at which point we'll be serving up a tasty gameplay dissection for your eyes only... *G*











P PREVIEW

SEGA SATURN

- DEVELOPER - WARP
- PUBLISHER - SEGA
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS -1
- DIFFICULTY - HARD
- AVAILABLE - WINTER



GLITCH
"Beep... Beep... Beep..." Argh! Where are they?!?










SATURN RESIDENT EVIL

There are two things you need to know about Saturn Resident Evil. 1) It's a good conversion. 2) It's a fantastic game. Let's deal with 1) first--just how good a conversion is it? Well, as you may have gathered by now, the graphics aren't quite as good as the PS version. The character models aren't gouraud shaded, the FMV isn't quite as clean (though it's still pretty good) and the transparencies have all been replaced with Sega's trademark 'mesh' effects. However, everything else --the backgrounds, sound, control, gameplay, frame rate, loading times and monster AI--are all identical. And besides, even with the slight drop in visual quality, it's still a great looking game.

But Resident Evil is more than just a great looking game. It's a great game, period. Dark, disturbing, tense, gory, puzzling, challenging--RE is the best "polygon characters in pre-rendered environments" adventure to date. Games like Alone in the Dark may have pioneered the genre, but Capcom took it to the next level with RE. The tension felt as you venture into a new area for the first time is only bettered by the satisfaction of pumping round after round into a group of shambling zombies.

The Saturn version of RE is based on the American PS version of the game, meaning unfortunately that some of the stronger material has been censored (boo!). It also means the game is much harder than the Japanese version, even with Jill. Thankfully, Saturn owners get a number of exclusive features including new costumes for Jill and Chris, new monsters (a new version of the Hunter, a zombified Wesker and a new Tyrant boss), and best of all, the action-packed Battle Mode (see Panel). Look, I'm overjoyed that Resident Evil finally made it to the Saturn. The exclusive features are just the icing on the cake. Take this as a gift from Capcom to all Saturn owners and go and buy it. You won't regret it. *K*





R REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

- DEVELOPER - CAPCOM
- PUBLISHER - CAPCOM
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1
- DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED
- AVAILABLE - NOW



KNIGHTMARE
You have once again entered the world of survival horror. Good Luck!






RESIDENT EVIL





BATTLE MODE!

Complete the game as either Jill or Chris and a new option opens up on the title screen: Battle Mode. This special mini-game ditches the complex puzzle elements of the regular quest in favor of pure, out-and-out blasting! You begin in the relative safety of the save room and must battle your way through 15 different 'scenarios' strategically using the limited weapons provided to clear each area of monsters. Hardcore!







NOBODY STEALS OUR CHICKS...AND LIVES!

DUKE NUKEM 3D

Blam! Like a twelve-gauge shotgun round to the chest *Duke Nukem 3D* blows you off your feet and knocks you back. This game is amazing!

On the one hand you have 3D Realms' original game design: hardcore non-stop action through dozens of expertly designed, super-interactive levels that actually resemble real places. Whether you're fighting in a night club, a space station, a bank or even a movie set, there's no danger of 'repetitive dungeon syndrome' here. But that's not all. 3D Realms also endowed *Duke 3D* with cool weapons (which are as satisfying to use as they are destructive), ugly-ass enemies, naked babes, and a politically incorrect hero who spouts a never ending string of hilarious one-liners. Of course, all that would mean squat if the conversion wasn't up to scratch (Saturn *Doom*, anyone?), but thankfully Lobotomy has pulled off *yet another* miracle by bringing *Duke 3D* 90% intact to the Saturn, strippers and all, on an engine that can only be described as blazing. You will not believe how smooth this game moves. It's clear to me now that Lobotomy has sold their collective souls to Satan in exchange for otherworldly programming skills!

I love this game. I love 3D Realms for making it. I love Lobotomy for converting it (beyond everyone's expectations). Heck, I even love Sega for hiring Lobotomy and authorizing Net Link support. So here's the deal my friends. Put down this magazine, go to your nearest videogame store and buy this game. Immediately. It rocks with TZW-like skill and will provide you with many, many hours of gaming bliss. Now if you'll excuse me I've got some serious NetLink Dukematches to attend to... K

















NETLINK

If you are lucky enough to own a NetLink you can enjoy *Duke Nukem 3D* with a friend in either DukeMatch or Co-operative play. Amazingly, there is NO LAG, even in co-op WITH monsters. *Duke 3D* is the first console game to offer TRUE deathmatch (no split-screen and no link cable), and is so much fun it's reason enough to purchase a Net Link. And when you do, I'll be waiting...

R REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - LOBOTOMY	# OF PLAYERS - 1 TO 2
PUBLISHER - SEGA	DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOW!



KNIGHTMARE
It's all about "Jevons control"!



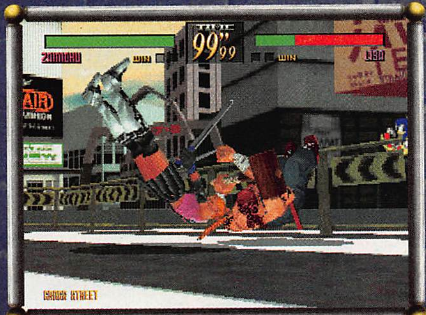


THE BEST MODEL 2 CONVERSION TO DATE! AM3 PUSHES THE SATURN TO NEW LIMITS!

LAST BRONX

Before I begin this review there's one little issue that needs clearing up. In Japan, *Last Bronx* came on two discs, in America it comes on one. So what do you lose? Well, a lot of FMV, some SD stuff that wasn't particularly impressive in the first place and a few training bits. A big deal? Not really. I mean sure, it would have been nice to have gotten the whole package, but the way things are with SOA these days, just be glad the game is coming out here at all...

Boot up *Last Bronx* and you'll immediately see the game's selling point: the graphics. Like *VF2*, *Last Bronx* runs at 60 fps, in hi-res, with a clever use of parallax and polygons to create the illusion that the backgrounds are 3D. It looks great, and certainly sets a new landmark as a Model 2 conversion. Even the weapons' tracer effects are in.




As a fighting game, *Last Bronx* comes across as the mutant offspring of *Fighting Vipers* and *VF2*. It retains the traditional Sega 3-button control setup (punch, kick, block) though it's not as fast as *Vipers*, nor as precise or strategic as *VF2*. The addition of weapons adds a fresh and lethal slant to the action (rounds can be over in as little as four hits), though for the most part combos are still *FV*-style PPK derivatives—you've seen it all before.

To AM3's credit, the game has a distinctive look and feel of its own that distinguishes it from *FV* or *VF2* (the characters aren't broken pop rejects like *FV*), though in my opinion it's simply not as good a game. The gameplay just doesn't feel as instinctive or fluid as AM2's fighters. That's not to say that *Last Bronx* is a bad game. Far from it. It's just that the competition these days is pretty stiff. Still, if you already own *VF2*, *FV* and *Megamix*, and are looking for your next 3D fighting fix, then *Last Bronx* should more than fit the bill. **K**









REVIEW | SEGA SATURN

- DEVELOPER - AM3
- PUBLISHER - SEGA
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 2
- DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
- AVAILABLE - NOW!



KNIGHTMARE
Things are looking up for Sega!!!







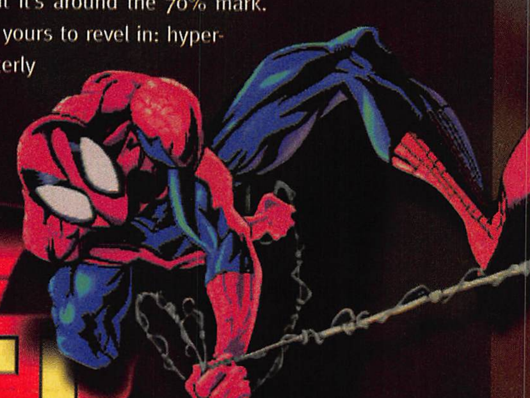


After a successful arcade run—and a year long delay—Capcom's *Marvel Super Heroes* finally reaches our eager, nay, lusting hands at GF. Was the extra year worth the wait? Did Capcom make good on the promise of an arcade-exact rendition? Would this former comic junkie writhe in spasms of pleasure upon viewing its utter majesty (we won't go into that)?! Read on, true believers...

Based loosely on the Infinity Gauntlet storyline, *MSH* features ten (+2 secret) of Marvel's most popular characters (Blackheart and Shuma Gorath notwithstanding) going toe-to-toe for the 'honor' of facing Thanos in the final battle. Featuring classic *SF*-style gameplay with some modifications, *MSH* pits hero vs. hero, villain vs. villain and everything in between for some truly spectacular fights. I'll spare you the other minor details which we've already covered a thousand times in past issues and get right down to the nitty gritty: How good a conversion is it?

Almost perfect, actually. All the art, all the backgrounds and all the characters have made it over intact. With a RAM cart you get 90% (maybe a little more) of the original frames; without it's around the 70% mark. However, with or sans cart, the same fast and furious gameplay is yours to revel in: hyper-jumps, air combos, super move madness and while the game is utterly intense with the RAM cart, there's often hefty slowdown when using the larger characters, e.g. the Hulk, Juggernaut, etc. It does tend to affect some combos, but after getting accustomed to the slower movement you'll be back up to speed in no time, thrashing those mere mortals you call friends. Interestingly the non-cart version features no slowdown; and even without the extra RAM it still destroys the current PS version we have in terms of frames. Music and sound effects are intact, and there doesn't seem to be the typical muffled voices usually found in Capcom's Saturn fighting games. Oh, and you're gonna have to buy the import RAM cart if you want the extra animation as neither Sega nor Capcom are bringing it to the US (they better bring the new one though [grrr]).

So should you buy it? Well, if you're sick and tired of *SF*-style games stay FAR away—this won't change your feelings about them (translation: about 5% of the general population). If, however, you live for trademark Capcom greatness then this is a must own—no question about it. This will more than hold you over till *SF vs. X-Men* makes its debut—Saturn *only*, PS heads. With or without RAM cart, this game is phenomenal and deserves (wait for it) a spot on everyone's shelf. Excelsior! ***ECM***







REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM
PUBLISHER - CAPCOM
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - 4TH QTR. '98



ECM
This one's for Dangohead!







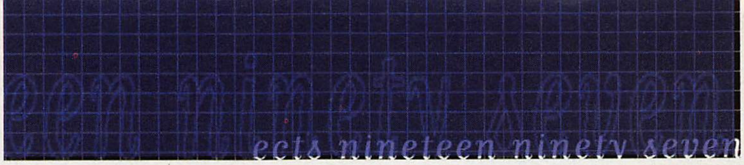






(above) The real-life Mace, Hawk, Smasher and Alana took time out from pummeling scum to pose!

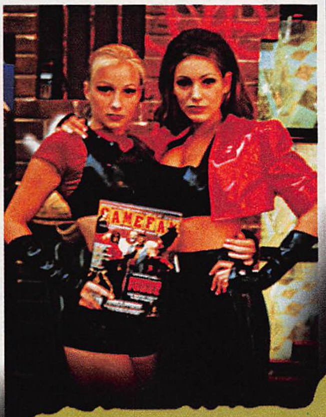
(below left) Masaya Matsuura, the producer of Parappa, was on hand to prove his coolness with the star himself, and (below right) Alana and Mace pose suggestively again for the rabid Hambleton... Kissy, kissy!



ECTS '97
Olympia, London
September 7-9

Every year, the gigantic elderly greenhouse known as Olympia (London's premiere exhibition center) bears host to the increasingly interesting ECTS; Europe's own version of our E3. Although primarily a meeting to discuss distributing new software throughout Europe, and with many software companies showing wares previously played at E3, there's always a few exciting surprises awaiting from companies who either weren't at E3 or announced new and exciting software recently. And so it came to pass that GameFan's own Chief Hambleton shambled his way into the proceedings. Infiltrating the event with a core group of UK gamers known only by their code-name of "C&VG", Hambleton went 'native' for three whole days, sipping tea and buttering crumpets with the best of them. Here's what the madman witnessed...



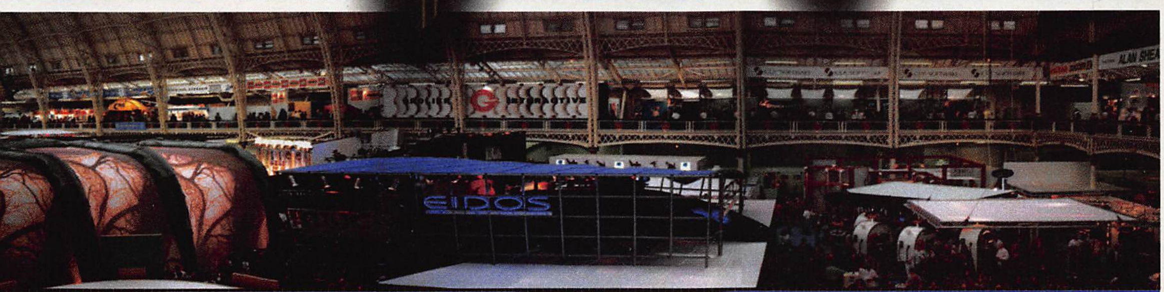


ECTS 97



(right) Of course, this being the UK, the Chief was more inclined to don his 'second player' outfit to blend in with the more conservative tea shoppe punters. A cuppa and a hot buttered scone; top notch!



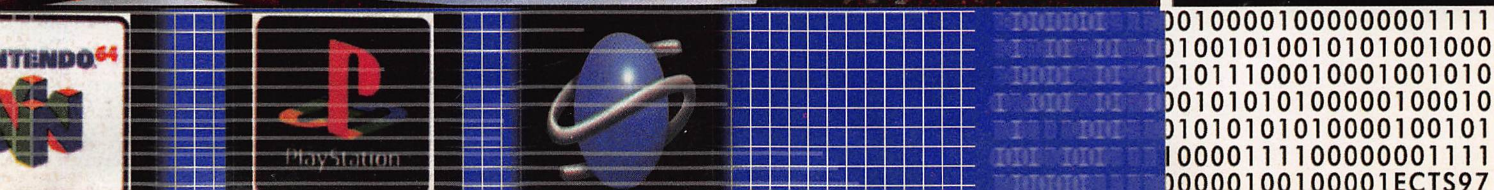


GAMES OF THE SHOW

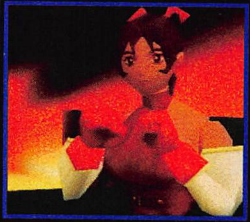
Note that these games don't include those games already previewed (at least, to any great degree) in the hallowed pages of GameFan...

1. Medievil
2. Burning Ranger
3. Rapid Racer
4. The Fifth Element
5. Micro Machines V3

SPECIAL MENTION: Death Tank Remix, Sentinel Returns



G.A.S.P.







Nagano 1998







Overall, this year's ECTS proved to be one of the most exciting in the last few years. The reasons for this increased fervor stem from the fact that there were actually more than three games present here that we hadn't seen before. Despite this excitement however, there was some annoying lack of software from Sega and Nintendo. As you'll discover when flipping through this report, Sony didn't just steal the show; they actually almost took over the entire arena! Don't believe me? Then check out the 'plethora' of wares peddled by the 'other two' console companies...

LYLAT WARS

NO *STARFOX* FOR UK NINTENDO OWNERS! INSTEAD, PAL GAMERS GET TO PLAY THE TRULY INSPIRED *LYLAT WARS*...JUST TRIPS OFF THE TONGUE, DON'TCHA THINK?

NINTENDO 64

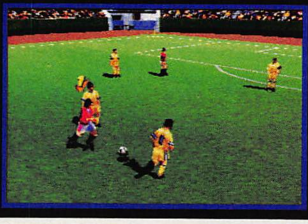
I expected *Diddy Kong Racing*. I wanted *Conker's Quest*. I was fair frothing with anticipation at the mere mention of the word *Banjo*... However, I was treated to PAL (i.e. slow) versions of *GoldenEye*, *StarFox 64* and even *Mario Kart 64*. Ah yes. *Mario Kart*. I believe I've played that one... LAST YEAR!! THE Games (taking care of business for Nintendo in the UK) had a polite representative to inform me that Rare had "left it too late to exhibit anything". What?! No Rare??!! Bah! Scouring the rest of the show, I avoided playing *Top Gear Rally*, *Extreme G* and *Turok* (gibber!) plus all those other games I'd been previewing for the past three months, and instead took a quick look at *Quake*, over at the GT stand. Very nice. Breathtakingly similar to the PC version. Except a little blurry... Over at Interplay, that strange bendy worm with a cow fixation was available... read more about *Earthworm Jim 3D* in the Interplay section of this report...

Finally, I wandered to the Konami stand, gibbered at the sight of their new beat-'em-up (*G.A.S.P.*) which looked very early and strangely motion-captured (combined *Tekken*-esque mannequins with oddly puppet-like motion capture—very Japanese and extremely plodding). Last but not least, I took a polygon skier out onto the slopes, courtesy of an early version of *Nagano 1998* with snow, tight-fitting lycra outfits and *Track and Field* style button-mashing (there's more info on *Nagano 1998* in the PlayStation section). Weaving through the crisp snow, I bounded over a hillock, zipped over a knoll and plummeted into an orange mesh boundary wall... where I promptly got stuck in a tumbling animation until the game crashed and Jon Slone (Konami UK) quietly ushered me off to other titles.. Cool stuff.

SEGA SATURN

After scouring the show room floor, I noted the sheer lack of anything remotely Sega-related. Just where was Sega UK's presence? Over in the Hilton hotel, a mere stone's throw away from the main proceedings, where a more sedate atmosphere greeted journalists after the maze of corridors had been negotiated. After some light refreshment, I was shown the superbly wonderful *Burning Ranger*, the flagship new title from those meisters of the Saturn, Sonic Team. Without wishing to repeat the Tokyo-tastic ramblings of Takuhi, I was treated to a mammoth playtest of this cross between *Tomb Raider* and *MegaMan Neo*. Spectacular lighting effects combined with fluid and suspenseful gameplay. Watch out for this one, Saturn folks... because there ain't much else! →

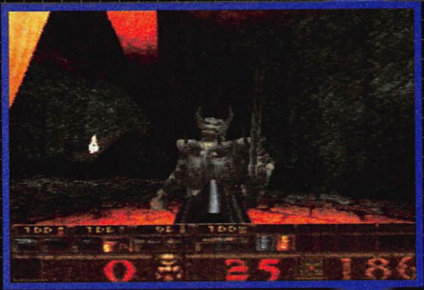




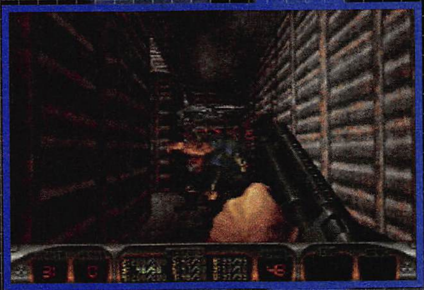
SONIC R (ABOVE)
WORLDWIDE SOCCER '98

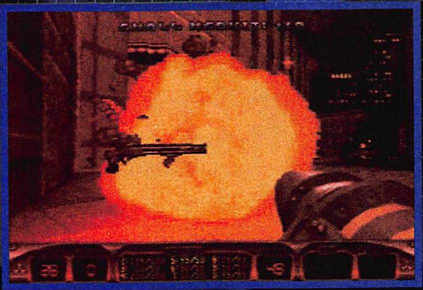
QUAKE





DUKE NUKEM





ATLANTIS





BURNING RANGERS







Yep, I'm afraid Sega was a pretty somber affair. Sega UK aren't interested in tackling the Sony behemoth anymore; they've wisely resigned to deliver high quality software from choice development teams to ensure the existing user-base isn't disappointed. And those choice developers don't come more discerning than Lobotomy, who graced us with *Quake* and *Duke Nukem*... along with an enhanced *Death Tank* which is bundled with *Duke*'s European launch. Despite the 8-bit graphics, *Death Tank* enthralled me for much longer than any other game in the show... a triumph of marvelous old-school gaming. Otherwise, Sega announced conversions of *House of the Dead*, *Panzer Saga*, *Winter Heat*, *Steep Slope Sliders*, *Riven* and *Grandia*. However, only *Steep Slope Sliders* was playable and actually there, and to be honest, wasn't looking up there with *Cool Boarders*... but only time will tell. Other than that, Sega held a pretty low profile at the show. We learned about *Formula Karts* (kart racing with eight tracks to choose from), those *Sonic* games I'm really starting to enjoy, *Atlantis*, an adventure game from Cryo and *Sega Worldwide Soccer '98*. Yep, nothing really new I'm afraid. Hell, I'd buy a Saturn for *Death Tank* alone, but I'm sure those PlayStation legions aren't gonna be swayed... Thankfully, Sega (at least in Europe), is turning its attention to the fans, and that's what counts.

Sega announced conversions of *House of the Dead, Panzer Saga, Winter Heat, Steep Slope Sliders, Riven* and *Grandia*.

SEGA™ セガ

FORMULA KARTS







SONY PLAYSTATION

Sony occupied a gigantic portion of the event, with almost every third party company present touting at least one Sony product in their wares. Of course, some developers (such as Namco) were swallowed in with Sony and their huge throbbing arena, and many other companies showed software previously played at E3, but there was a great load of new software to get very excited about... Note that any companies not mentioned below (say for example... Acclaim) showed software previously previewed in GameFan, whilst other companies had games that Takuhi is covering in his report.



JONAH LOMU RUGBY







TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP







MICRO MACHINES

CODEMASTERS

A relatively small third part company, Codemasters not only won me over with subliminal advertising, but drew me to the booth with the promise of a more complete version of *Micro Machines V3* (one of the most eagerly anticipated titles in the UK next to *James Pond 64*). They did not disappoint. *Micro Machines V3* retains all the giddy elements of the 16-bit classic, but with truly inspired visuals... 32 vehicles, loads of huge and novel tracks (across breakfast nooks, over pool tables)... where's my copy??!! Another notch in the Codemasters bow has to *be TOCA Touring Car Championship*, a marvelously realistic rally game with all the markings of a *Formula 1*, but with chunkier rally cars. Also up for inspection was *Colin McRae World Rally* (just photos I'm afraid... no game engine as yet), and a secret title that could potentially eclipse the sales of *Final Fantasy VII* in this country. That's right, I'm talking about *Jonah Lomu Rugby*!!

EIDOS

I'm mentioning the Eidos stand, not because they showed any new games (this was the E3 booth in full effect), but for extra, er, 'enticements' that Eidos had laid out. This included women in extremely tight-fitting outfits with their "bajubblies" hanging out, large muscular gentlemen parading around in vests (sigh, if only Shidoshi had been there to see that!), not to mention the real Lara Croft. And to top it all off, Core's PR lady had a stunning new hair-do! All this ensured that Eidos was the most crowded booth at the ECTS. The plethora of killer titles may have played a small part as well.



AUTO DESTRUCT



FIFA



POPULOUS

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Apart from their collection of sports titles, three new pieces of software galvanized my interest over at EA, not least of which was *Populous: The Third Coming*, the next in line in Sid Meier's seminal God-sim games. The third *Populous* follows the format of the first two exactly, but with one important difference... the worlds are fully 3D. With unmatched game mechanics, simulation fans are rabidly awaiting this one. Otherwise, *Auto Destruct* proved to be a "zip around a 3D town a-killin'" type of affair, with slightly glitchy graphics, and that *FIFA Road to World Cup '98* title... let's just hope my sports gaming brethren take to this better than *FIFA 64*...

GREMLIN

Gremlin Interactive were one of the few software stands where you came away fully satisfied after gorging yourself on three new PlayStation pieces, such as *N20*. Boasting some jaw-dropping lighting effects, this arcade-style shoot-'em-up promises addictive gameplay and more than delivers. Kaleidoscopic would be approaching a description for the visuals. Another cool title was *Buggy*, a racing title with a twist; you're at the wheel of a remote-control buggy as it winds around courses, transforming into aircraft and other vehicles faster than Optimus Prime. Lastly, *Judge Dredd* strides into silicon once again. I took a drokking patrol on the grud-damned streets of Mega City One and perp me if the game isn't G-con 45 compatible! Featuring the Dark Judges, two player action, SGI rendered enemies and a thumbs up from 2000AD themselves, we judged this on-rails gun game game very highly. Stommtastic, mate!

JUDGE DREDD







INTERPLAY

A cracking turn out for the Interplay stand and a load of new games shown to boot. Although we'd seen some at E3 previously, we were excited at the extra ten percent added to the completion, and oohed and ahhed at all of Shiny's stuff (specifically *MDK* and *Wild 9*) as well as some other offerings. *Crime Killer* was looking sweet, this 3D driving around cyber cities gunning down evil helicopters, bikes and cars in all manner of futuristic police vehicles looks to be a sure-fire winner. It's entertaining, zips about at 60 fps, and the doughnuts you can achieve in your police pursuit vehicle are outrageous... a little more re-draw, and this could be big. Next, *Earthworm Jim 3D* was gearing up for a Spring '98 release and looks very strange indeed. Jim controls well enough, but looks distinctly 2D against the sprawling 3D back-drops. The developers have tried to go for a '50s cartoon feel to the game, and the results are mixed at the moment. More frames of animation would snuff my fears, as the rest of the game is Jim at his finest. *Earthworm Jim 3D* is scheduled for the N64 as well, but all I saw was the PC version.

Next, there was *Powerboat Racing*, and as the name suggests, splashing about in boats is the order of the day. The 3DFX PC version looked stunning, and the PS version running next to it? Very very early to make early judgments on. *Red Asphalt* was there under the *Rock and Roll Racing 2* moniker. And... finally... oh... my GOHD, Spock... there... was... *StarFleet Academy*. "The Klingons are approaching, kiptin!"





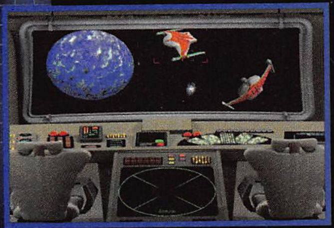
CRIME KILLER



EARTHWORM JIM



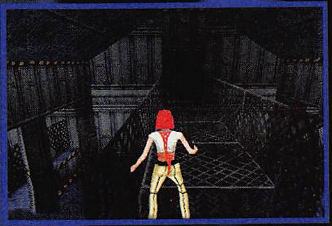
POWERBOAT RACING

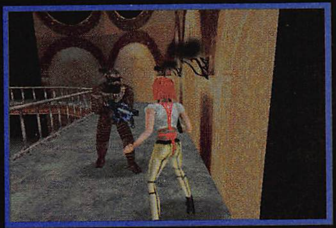


STARFLEET ACADEMY

KALISTO

Those crazy French dudes were out in force to promote their forthcoming *The Fifth Element* release, scheduled for March. Utilizing an enhanced version of the *Nightmare Creatures* graphics engine, *TFE* is the first PS game to feature fading to color fog (other games simply fade to black), and superb light-sourcing meaning that spooky green lights bathe your character in a spooky greenness. Similar effects are available in red-lit areas. The action is a lot less creeping terror and a lot more futuristic punch, kick and blast away with a vast array of mad guns. Expect mammoth coverage on this title as soon as a distributor is found...





KONAMI

Despite some problems which their hardware (both PlayStations and Nintendo 64s decided to crash their software at inopportune moments), Konami had a storming line-up. Aside from *Goemon* and *Metal Gear Solid* (not out until mid '98! Arrgh!), there was *Midnight Run* which was framey but very close to the arcade, *Lethal Enforcers* (er...), and the very cool *Nagano 1998*, the snowy version of the critically acclaimed *Track and Field*. With over 10 events from the Bobsleigh to the Downhill, there's elements of *Alpine Racer* and good ol' fashioned thumb-skinning button-mashing for such events as the Skating. Really polished and extremely playable. Fine multi-player action awaits those in the s'know... (Sorry).





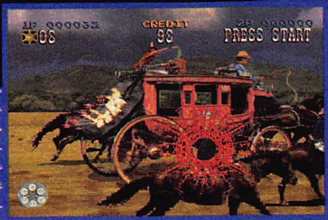
NAMCO

Despite nothing on the *Tekken 3* front (it's out in Japan next March, the backgrounds are 2D at the moment, the graphics the PlayStation is throwing about are said to be nothing short of mind-blowing), Namco was bundled in with Sony and provided avid gamers with more *Time Crisis* and *Point Blank* than they could possibly handle. I also waved the G-Con 45 around for a bit. It's lightweight, gray and exactly like the Japanese version. Except gray. And one final point for *Soul Blade* freaks. Li Long's nun-chuks aren't nun-chuks in the UK. Why you may ask? Well, during the 1970s, Bruce Lee films hit the UK, and half a dozen Brits came a cropper trying to emulate this ancient art of whipping deadly bits of chain and wood around their heads. The weapons were banned and any film with them in was cen

MIDNIGHT RUN



LETHAL ENFORCERS



NAGANO 1998



100001000 0001111
001010010 1001000
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00000100100001ECTS97

(continued) sored. Of course, this archaic law is still in effect, those cunning censors saw *Soul Blade* and went "cor blimey, mate, ya can't have that in there!". Li's weapon is now a strange three block two chain affair because apparently, three bits of wood are okay to twirl about yer bonce, but two? NO WAY!!! And you thought American laws were crazy...

PSYGNOSIS

The sparkling jewel in the Sony crown, Psygnosis provided gamers with a mass taste of games to come, and of course as you'd expect, everything was plastered with Designers Republic-influence decals. Aside from titles already approaching the US (such as *Formula 1 '97* and *Discworld II*), Psygnosis showed off *Power Soccer 2*, *Psybadek* (a crazy platform game with unique level designs and weaponry), *Rascal* (that 3D platform game E Storm's been salivating for), *Elric* (a roaming beat-'em-up set in the fantasy worlds created by Michael Moorcock—the Boris Vallejo of the UK fantasy 'big-breasted women with huge bastard sword' art movement), and *Sentinel Returns* (the remake of the joyous BBC Computer strategy game where you had to get onto higher ground before the Sentinel stopped and minced you). Some very eagerly awaited titles. I'm especially keen on a bit of *Sentinel* action myself, the 3D environments are superb.



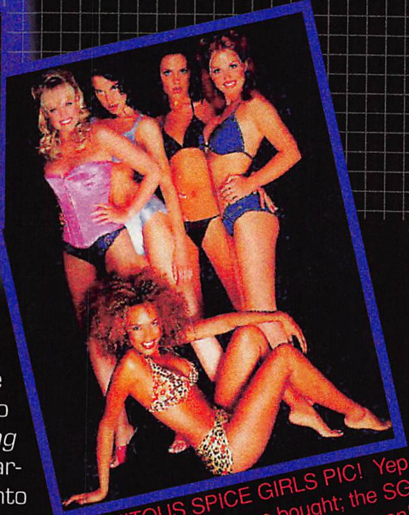
PSYBADEK



POWER SOCCER 2



ELRIC



GRATUITOUS SPICE GIRLS PIC! Yep, the rights have been bought; the SG video game will arrive soon!!

SONY

Sony's booth was dark and featured flickering *Crash Bandicoot* visuals, a truly appalling announcer without any degree of video game knowledge whatsoever ("*Colony Wars*! It's great!!"), but that didn't matter. The quality of Sony's software shone through. The two stars of the show (aside from those games previously played like *Crash*) were undoubtedly *Medievil* and *Rapid Racer*. *Medievil* is without a doubt the most exciting video game I've had the pleasure of playing for a very long time. Not convinced? Try *imagining Ghouls and Ghosts* in a 3D environment. Now add magical glowing light sourcing, marvelously animated spiky polygon figures and superb level design and you're on your way into the delight of *Medievil*. We're waiting extremely impatiently for this one... Of course there was also *Wipeout* on the water in the shape of *Rapid Racer*, a 60 fps water experience with eight tracks, astounding 3D physics and a host of outboard motors writhing around curving courses.

Elsewhere, there was the English translation of that *Resident Evil 2* demo, a couple of Japanese-related games, *Roscoe McQueen* and his amazing hose (already seen at E3), more info on the *X-Files* point-and-click game, and a brief video wall showing of Sony's ultra-secretive new racing title. Also present was a PlayStation conversion of *Z*, a robotic strategic game in the *Command & Conquer* style. Of course, the most exciting news of all was the impending video game of the *Spice World* movie. Yes, you read that correctly, those five tarts are on their way to silicon heaven and into the minds of 14-year-old male gamers across the globe. Let's face it... we really really want this game...







MEDIEVIL



RAPID RACER



ROSCOE MCQUEEN

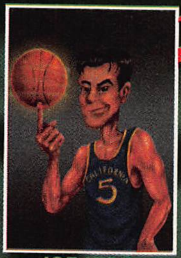
TELSTAR

Heading up the Telstar stand was *Wreckin Crew*, which certainly looked fun enough (like a mutated version of *Road Rash*, in fact), but was a little too wacky for my taste. One of the kerazy characters is called Kenny Ravitz. Hilarious! Neatly side-stepping *Bubsy*, I gave thumbs up to an increasingly-anticipated *Excalibur*, checked out the eminently playable *Formula Karts* which looked rather polished, and turned my attention to the delightfully named *Joe Blow*, and his amazing...er... blowing power. Think *Mario 64* with about a third of the bells and whistles running, and you're on your way to envisaging this mad monkey's adventures...

And so, three days later, the show came to an end. Although not as hugely massive as the E3 behemoth, the ECTS has certainly become a vital event of the video game year. Despite frankly scary Spice Girl impersonators, warm beer, scary-toothed locals, a huge inflatable Croc with a puncture and a severe lack of Nintendo and Sega software, a cracking time was had by all... Until next year... tatty bye!

Chief Hambleton would like to thank Frank and Maxine at Activision, Tom, Paul and Ed plus all those fanatical gamers over at C&VG, Jackie at Namco UK, Suzie at Core Design and Pete at Sony UK for their help.

GAMEFAN Sports



JOE KIDD

KIDD'S Corner

Oh How I Wish I Was 6'10"...

I've never seen a vinyl record, the War in the Persian Gulf was before I was born, and I grew up on MTV. It's been 2 years since I was taking P.E., Home Economics and studying about a guy named Reagan in World Civ. I was 6'10" back then, now I'm 7'0" tall. My size says Power Forward/Center, but my mad skillz say "Put me anywhere." Last year I made the NBA All-Star team in just my second year. My team drafted my best friend so I'd be happy and stay. Nike knocked on my door yesterday and wanted to extend my contract. Chicago says they want me to run the show after MJ leaves. A few months ago I turned my head from $17 million a year. But, I just signed the richest contract in sports history, at just over $120 million over the next 6 years, $30 million of it or so, I'll get this year... but hey, 'It wasn't about the money.' Last night I placed myself in the top 2% of the wealthiest people in the world at the age of 21... this morning I was late to practice. The owner of my team paid less to buy the entire team, than it cost to buy me. My cards are worth thousands, my autographs hundreds... Who am I? Welcome to the big leagues, Mr. Garnett and the world of supply and demand. No, there aren't many 7-footers than can pass like a point guard, shoot like a 2 and defend like a 3 with a center's size. Yes, teams today will pay the coin to get you. What else can they do? Keep losing their best players because that's what the market demands, or step up to the plate for their franchise guys and pay out more than they could afford? This is the question NBA owners and GM's are faced with these days, further developing the gap between the big market teams and the small markets. We've already seen one example in Denver, who flat out refused to pay their top guy (McDyess) $20 million a year, because he, nor anybody in the NBA is worth that amount. So while Denver's stance was admirable in many respects, it was all admonition that they would never be able or willing to play with the big boys as long as this is what market value determined. Is that scary or what? Remember now, I love KG and I love the NBA about as much as anybody, but this keeps up and we've got some prolemo's, you know? In the meantime, we always have these sweet NBA titles to lose ourselves with in '98: Live (EA), ShootOut (Sony), In The Zone (Konami), NBA Action (Sega) and Fastbreak (Midway).

Joe Kidd can be reached for questions or comments at: rlee@metropolismedia.com

"JOE" VIEWPOINTS "STRAP"



NHL 98
EA Sports

"JOE": *NHL 98* takes one back after losing big on the gridiron. It's not by much, but the presentation is fantastic, highlighted by the sharp commentary. Both *FaceOff* and *NHL* have truly left the rest of the field behind, with a brand new standard in hockey games. You feel the need to talk about both at the same time, because they ARE SO CLOSE! This year *NHL 98* gets the nod.

G	C	P	M	O	
9	9	8	9	8	94

"STRAP": I thought Madden was pretty good, actually, but Kidd's right: *NHL 98* is EA's best effort in some time. Everything is solid, from game options to amazing presentation, and a whole bunch of commentary extras that add immeasurably to the realism. But better than *FaceOff*? Mmn...better for true hockey fans, at least.

G	C	P	M	O	
9	8	9	9	9	95



NHL FaceOff '98
Sony

"JOE": A legendary hockey game by anyone's standards, as Sony solidifies another chapter in the *FaceOff* series. There's no doubt that *FaceOff*'s reached a gameplay level equalled only by *NHL 98*, but in the end I feel it comes up a hair short of *NHL 98*, simply because the presentation is not as impressive. When you have 2 games as solid as these are, it takes a little push to win the Cup. Heck of a game nonetheless.

G	C	P	M	O	
9	9	8	7	8	93

"STRAP": Well...I'll be playing more *NHL 98* than *FaceOff*, that's just a fact. Why? Because this year *NHL 98* is the closest you can get to the sport in terms of presentation and gameplay. FaceOff '98, mind you, has a stunning engine and practically flawless control (although it doesn't *feel* as good as *NHL*, per se). It's not a toss-up, but it's a real close second.

G	C	P	M	O	
9	8	8	8	8	93



PGA TOUR 98
EA Sports

"JOE": It's funny how your opinion of 2 games from the same company can be so different. I guess *PGA Tour 98* represents the lower end of the spectrum in my book. Nothing too new, same old slow pace... more-so the load time than the actual gameplay. It's just brutally painful to sit through and detracts from any good there may be otherwise. Unfortunately for us, it may still be the best out there.

G	C	P	M	O	
9	8	4	6	6	74

"STRAP": O.K., I ain't standing for this nonsense anymore!!! NO MORE DAMN SLIDE SHOWS, O.K.? And this much loading? No thanks. EA comes up with gorgeous real-time engines in all their other sports titles...why not drop the frame rate a little and make *PGA Tour* polygonal? Think of the improvements! The options! You could check out any angle...plan your shots...feel like you're in those real PGA environments...until they go that way, ixnay.

G	C	P	M	O	
3	5	5	5	3	50



NBA Live 98
EA Sports

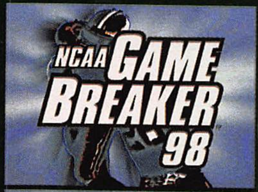
"JOE": I'm a fan once again! What a great job EA has done with *Live* this year. Some of the best NBA-type details ever, and the TNT presentation is sweet. It's nice to feel that hoop addiction once again. I have found a fair share of "bugs" in this game, more like loopholes you can capitalize on, like knocking guys out of bounds, but a small thing indeed for such an entertaining game.

G	C	P	M	O	
9	8	9	9	8	94

"STRAP": This is a great game of b-ball! While *Shootout* is still my fave, in terms of presentation, *Live 98* plays like a champ. They've really gone all out capturing the NBA feel, with player's names and faces all over the place and excellent attract screens. The engine's seen little enhancement, but there's noticeably less polygonal glitching.

G	C	P	M	O	
7	8	8	7	7	84

« P R E V I E W S «









NCAA GameBreaker '98

Well the pigskin kings are back, but this time they're hitting the college ranks. Sony brings their awesome *GameDay* engine and puts out a game worth of the NCAA license itself. This isn't merely *GameDay* with college logos, although the appearance of the game is just as good with all of the polygonal players you've grown to love. There are over 2000 new plays to choose from and if you aren't using Total Control Passing, you're sure to be running the option complete with Pitch Fakes, Pile Diving, Tight Roping and Shoulder Charging animations. So you have the best of *GameDay* in terms of 3D players and impact tackles, but with total NCAA AI. Completely new is the "Passing Radar Screen", a new system that allows you to see all WR's even while using zoomed-in camera perspectives. I for one love the idea of having all the detail of the close-up, yet not losing the down-field perspective. You can look forward to end of the season awards like the *Heisman*, as well as try to get your stars on the *College All American Team*. Track your team throughout the season via the weekly Top 25 and work yourself up the ladder. You'll want to make sure you're keeping your eye on the competition, so take a look at all of the NCAA leaders as they are statistically tracked over 50 categories throughout the season. Feeling creative? Create a Walk-On athlete. Now remember, no money, no cars, that's an NCAA violation, but you can create the ultimate high school recruit and throw him on your roster. How about Creating your own play? Well break out the chalkboard, it's time to test your knowledge of X's and O's. This brand new Play Editor Mode lets you create your very own passing and running plays and then save them to your personalized playbook! "Ok... now you go to the tree, you run in a circle and that fake like you're going to the fire hydrant, and you block..." Look for this game to come out later this Fall, and our review next issue!









The moment of truth arrived the other day and *NBA Live 98* was its name. Were they going to stick to the same muddled up gameplay as last year, saved only by the beautiful presentation and options, or were they going to shore up the playability and come out swinging? Well after initial test runs, and several victory laps later, EA was headed towards the winner's circle.

It's the first basketball game out, but what a start out of the gates! *Live 98* has sped up the gameplay and everything feels in sync. A fastbreak really feels like a fastbreak now, especially when you're finishing with a spin-move through the key, throwin' down the reverse slam. There's always a guy cutting to the hoop, players lunging for the put-backs, jump saves and sharp passes whizzing everywhere... players even carry the ball just like real life NBA! You get the feeling the defense has really stepped up in *98*, even though it's still really easy to beat on almost every level. One of the highlights you'll appreciate is the "Illegal Defense" call. The call is made pretty quick in my opinion and is a little unfair when you've been whistled, but only because your man to guard was off the screen; nowhere to be found. But just for getting that call into the game, you gotta give EA the props. Unfortunately however, *Live 98* has not succeeded in losing the "small, quick guy" syndrome. All of the quick, little guards can break the defenses down easily and usually get off a very high percentage shot. In fact, Dana Barros should change his name to Jordan in this game for all I know.

The players' appearances are too much—the likeness of their faces to their actual counterparts are the most accurate of any game ever. You gotta check out Big Dog... dead on! Oh yeah, Gat and his headband is classic, and if you like that, you'll really like the New Player feature. They've added headbands, goggles, sunglasses, funky hairdos, porkchop sideburns, the works. You know I had to make my monstrous 7'9", 350 pound man in the middle for my Warriors... they need a big guy, you know? Another sweet feature? That would be the 3-Point Shootout. Why is it so fun? I don't know, why are the Hansons millionaires? But something about getting that money ball with time running out, you're Rice, he's Reggie... that's some stuff there. There's no fantasy draft available, a feature I generally love these days, but they do have a Custom Team option that serves up some User Stat fun.

My problems with the game? The default setting is set to Auto Subs and Auto Timeouts.





NBA LIVE 98



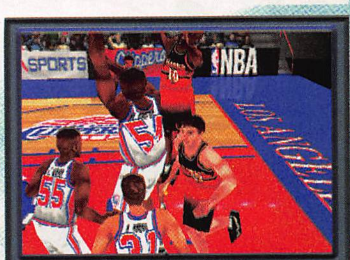
"...spin-move through the key, throwin' down the reverse slam!"

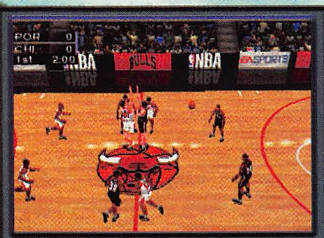
Half the fun of sports games is coaching your team, and yes that entails making your own substitutions and calling your own timeouts. I guess I feel a little embarrassed that EA makes such hardcore sports titles, and then plays us for coaching idiots... we're not all Don Nelsons. I mean, you may forget to turn the auto timeouts off, and only find out after you've made a steal and have started the fastbreak that hey! ... the computer's calling a timeout for me! Oh, on the inbounds pass, you can't defend it. Yes, you can put your man in front of the inbound passer, but you can't jump or try to steal or anything. If you want a couple cheap plays, try this: First, a flagrant foul is pretty easy to get with Turbo (R1) and Hand Check (O). Every time you achieve an ff, the foulee gets injured; at least an entire quarter. Takeout the star player, get it? Second, with the same 2 buttons, you can either knock a guy near the sidelines out of bounds and gain possession, or else do the same just as he's crossing mid-court—instant backcourt violation.

Overall, I'm really impressed with the changes they've brought to the game to make it a more explosive game. Not only is the whole pace of the game a lot quicker, but the new animations—tons of dunks, baseball passes, leaners and fade-aways, beautiful swats—really depict what the league is all about. They still haven't evaded that "slippery" feel you get, kind of like running down a bowling lane, but aside from that it looks and feels nice. Speaking of looks, the presentation as always is very "NBA", big and impressive as they emulate the 'NBA on TNT' type style. Enhancing the whole NBA feel are tons of new camera perspectives and angles. You'll be telling your friends about the slo-mo instant replays, with beautiful close-ups of all the best action shots which stem from some very creative angles. All of the sounds capture that TNT feeling as well, from the arena sounds and crowd cheers to good old Ernie Johnson, Jr. and Verne Lundquist themselves. A very quality game here from the guys who know sports. ***JK***



Extreme close-ups of your favorite (and not-so-favorite) NBA hoopsters!











GAMEFAN SPORTS

R REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - EA

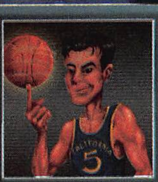
PUBLISHER - EA

FORMAT - CD

\# OF PLAYERS - 1-8

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER



JOE KIDD
It's fun spanking "The Rookie"



NHL FACEOFF 98



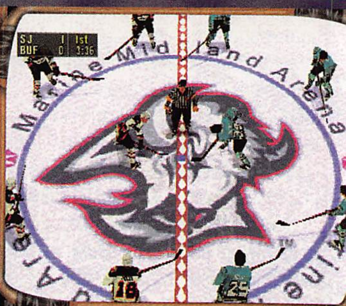
FIGHT!! FIGHT!!
Take yer Gloves off!















Just in time for the beginning of the hockey season, Sony fires a blistering slapshot in the form of *NHL FaceOff '98*. Like the many other heated rivalries between EA Sports and Sony Sports, *FaceOff* has developed a healthy, nay, cutthroat competition with EA's *NHL* franchise that may be the most intense of them all. *NHL FaceOff '98* has many a hockey fan drooling over what may be the most sophisticated gameplay of any hockey title, ever.

In general, the biggest problem I have with hockey titles is the limited control and overall lack of playability in many of them. If I'm not racin up and down the hardcourt, or barrelin' down the turf it feels a little foreign to me. I don't think it has much to do with the slick surface, just that it has never been accurately reproduced until now. *NHL FaceOff '98* features ultra-responsive control that even the most jaded hockey fan would do flips over. This brings great comfort to my skate-weary soul, seeing as how I don't have to hold the D-pad down 5 seconds ahead of time to actually get a player going in a given direction. Nothing is more frustrating than having a game that doesn't react when you want it to—what's with that? A built-in handicap? Thanks, but no thanks. The movement is super-smooth, and the players' skating radius is so tight, that "total control" takes on a whole new meaning (I swear I caught a glimpse of Nirvana). Now we just need the power of analog control—maybe next year.

The one minor gameplay objection that I had with the game is that the players feel too light. I couldn't shake the feeling that the skaters needed a jolt of gravity and just a little taste of friction—a small physics problem, so to speak. I found that by adjusting the speed about 5 points slower, it remedied this for the most part. It still didn't have the solid feel of *NHL 98* in that respect, but made it more than bearable. So while the tempo and control is everything you could want, the feel of the skaters remains questionable.

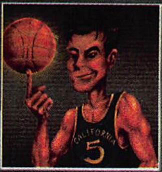
Now let me get the nit-picking out of the way , since that's essentially what I'm doing—nit-picking a virtually flawless hockey game. People have come to love the TV-style presentation of EA sports, and *FaceOff '98* goes wide of the net this year. Lacking is the colorful dual-commentary of EA, and the dynamic camera with intermittent zoom-ins and fade-outs. They don't have the authentic sponsors and music that *NHL 98* possesses, although some may argue that those things are secondary to the overall game. Perhaps, but if there's a game that delivers the full package, then that's the standard to beat—EA scores this year on that count. Not to sell Sony short, as what they lack in TV presentation is more than made up with an "at the game" feel. Authentic sirens and horns from each arena, lens flares (argh!) and flying Gatorade bottles will have most hockey maniacs frothing regardless of some minor omissions.

To make sure we're being fair (we are, ya know), *NHL 98* doesn't have Icon Passing. And while the directional passing is formidable, it's no substitute for the sheer beauty of *FaceOff*'s passing system. Th IP in *FaceOff* enables you to do so much it's simply foolish not to use it. Whether it's leaving the puc behind for a trailer to rocket home, or the most precise 2-on-1 breakaway ever seen on the PS, it's all ther with IP. The best part of IP in *FaceOff '98* is that you can see the icons o the players in front of you, behind you, and off the screen due to the use o it. Basically, the system not only gives you more control and even greate precision, it gives you a clearer view of the rink and player position in game that is limited by the size of your monitor—good thinking, Sony.

FaceOff '98 will give you what you're looking for across the boar Not only are the controls and presentation solid, but the graphics an animation are top notch as well. You'll see separate animations fo falling and getting up, secondary goalie saves, glass reverberation i 8 different locations (!) and at any given time, and you can even launch th puck between your opponent's legs. There isn't much left to the imag ination, as *FaceOff* leaves it all out on the ice. Now if only I could driv that darn Zamboni... **JK**

GAMEFAN SPORTS
REVIEW
PlayStation

DEVELOPER - SONY	# OF PLAYERS - 1-8
PUBLISHER - SONY	DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOW



JOE KIDD
Even the fighting is way cool.

GO GO GOAL! J.LEAGUE ゴーゴーゴール!








The Saturn is the place to be this fall and winter for the ultimate in Soccer action. First-up we'll see Sega's fantastic *Worldwide Soccer '98*-destined to be a huge hit-then coming second is the great looking game you see here, Tecmo's *Go Go Goal!* G3 is blessed with a strong engine and quite a few gameplay innovations, as well as an ultra-solid set of options.

We're using a final, production copy of the japanese *Go Go Goal* for this preview, as Tecmo continues to localize the US version. The import is fully licensed by J-League (Japan's National Soccer organization), so Tecmo USA will be changing names and converting the ball-clubs into fictional, international teams. Apart from that, however, the game should stay intact. With this in mind, let's run-down some of the key highlights featured in G3...






Once we have the first translated version of *Go Go Goal* we'll touchdown with the final Review, and see how it compares to the latest soccer sims out there. See you then!

BASIC TRAINING!



Just like the Saturn's soccer pedigree (*WWS '98*), *Go Go Goal* offers a great bag 'o player tricks, moves, and skills. Among the footy ammunition, players can release flip kicks, behind-the-back-chip passes, and easily directed headers. One of *G3*'s strongest points is its excellent controls, so enjoy these moves!

HOT ACTION!



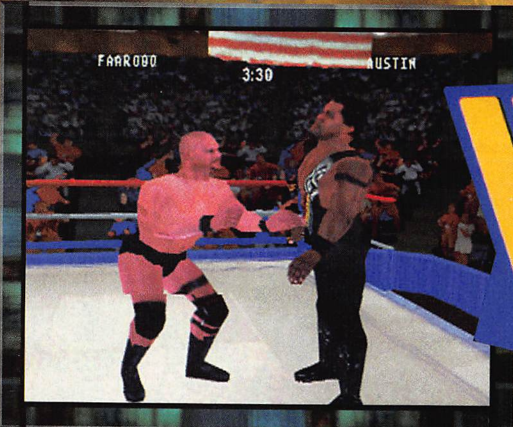
Go Go Goal has a powerful engine! While not quite in the league of Sega's *World Wide Soccer* in terms of sheer animation quality, *G3* enjoys higher resolution and a better overall frame rate. The engine is so good, in fact, that all pre-game cinemas are in real-time... and they look *good*!

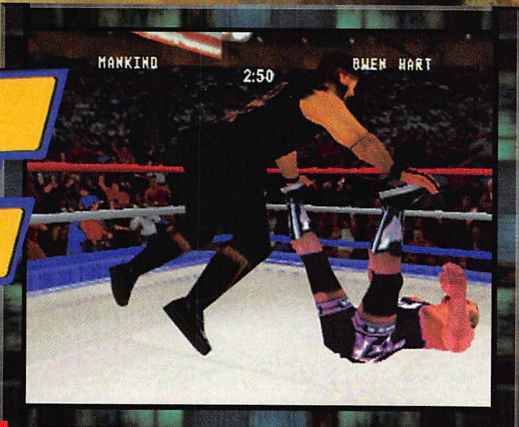
GAMEFAN SPORTS | PREVIEW | SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - TECMO	# OF PLAYERS - 1-6
PUBLISHER - TECMO	DIFFICULTY - TBD
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - 1ST QTR. '98

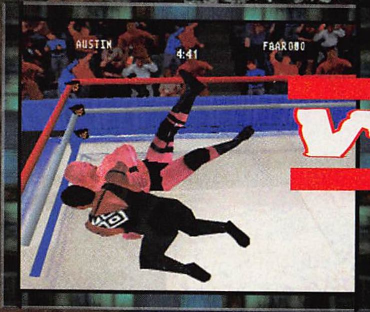


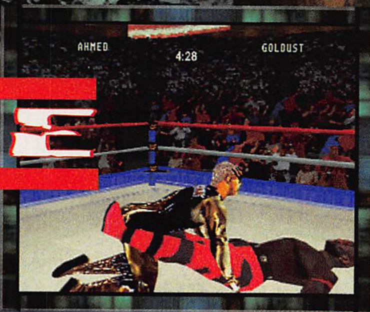
JACQUES STRAP
go...
GO...
GOOOOOOOOOAL!



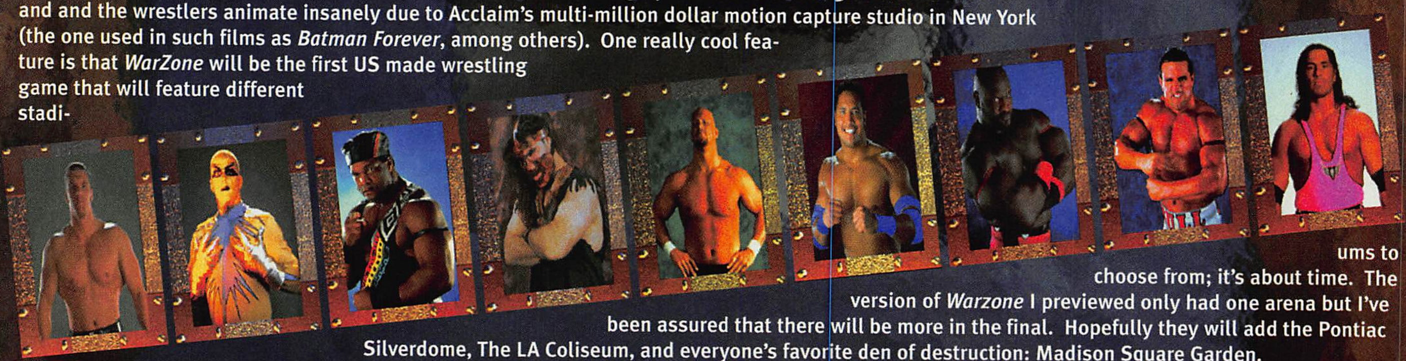


WWF THE WARZONE





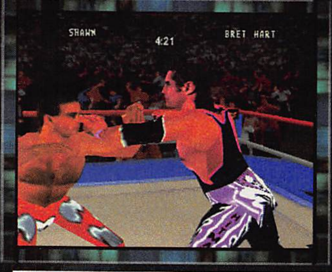
Acclaim's newest N64 game *WWF: The WarZone* recently arrived at GF headquarters and here's the scoops on this neck-breakin' title. The first thing that reaches out and grabs ya by the short and curlies are the intensely smooth 3D arenas and wrestlers. The graphics run at a solid 30 frames a second and and the wrestlers animate insanely due to Acclaim's multi-million dollar motion capture studio in New York (the one used in such films as *Batman Forever*, among others). One really cool feature is that *WarZone* will be the first US made wrestling game that will feature different stadi-



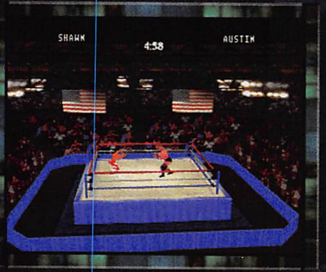
ums to choose from; it's about time. The version of *Warzone* I previewed only had one arena but I've been assured that there will be more in the final. Hopefully they will add the Pontiac Silverdome, The LA Coliseum, and everyone's favorite den of destruction: Madison Square Garden.

The list of wrestlers reads like a Who's Who of mutants, freaks, and golden boys: Golddust, Bret Hart, Owen Hart, The British Bulldog, Ahmed Johnson, Cactus Jack/Dude Love/Mankind, Triple H (Hunter Hurst Hemsley), Shawn Michaels, Farooq, UnderTaker, Rocky Maivia (who shouldn't even be in the game because he's a really poor worker), Ken Shamrock (who was not in our preview copy), and of course Stone Cold Steve Austin all made the cut (very impressive given the limitations of the cart format). All of their patented bone-breakin', body-smashin' moves are in and there are five modes of gameplay: WWF Challenge, VS., Tag Team & CO Tag Team, Weapons, Cage, and Ladder. The only modes available were the WWF Challenge (that's where your chosen wrestler battles it out for the WWF Heavyweight and Intercontinental Belts) and Vs. mode.

The gameplay is similar to *New Japan Pro Wrestling* (that's a VERY good thing, wrestling fanatics) and all of the moves were child's play to perform—it's all about busting the Undertaker's Tombstone on some hapless friend—YEAH! Up to four players can play simultaneously,but I only got a taste of the two player mode in the preview copy, so I can't say anything about how four players plays... yet. Perhaps the coolest feature not yet implemented in the game will be the feud mode: a wrestler will be able to interfere in a match (hit 'em with a chair!), and voila, all manner of animosity! *WWF: WarZone* is due in June of '98 and all ya wrestlin' fiends should start scraping some change together now (look under the mat, I hear they drop some during bouts) as it seems this could be the best wrestler since *Pro Wrestling* arrived over ten years ago (has it been that long?!). In the mean time, get those teeth fixed, head checked, and buy some new tights—this one is gonna be a beast! *E*







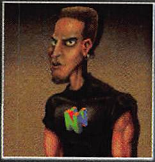


P PREVIEW

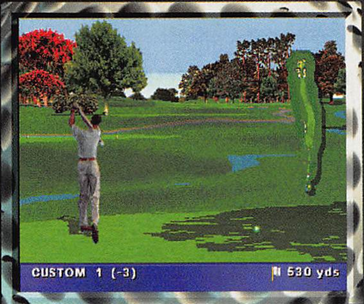
NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - ACCLAIM
PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM
FORMAT - 96 MB CART

OF PLAYERS - 1-4
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - 4TH QTR. '98



ENQUIRER
Enter the Tiny Stallion...

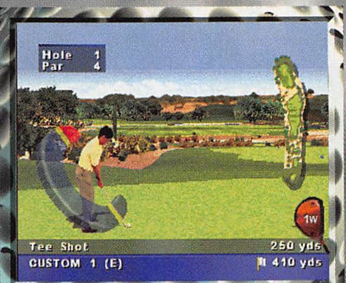


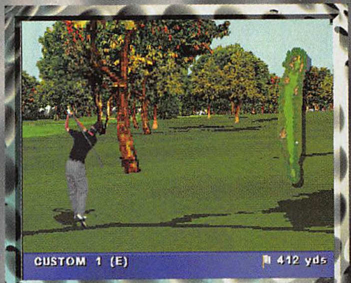


EA SPORTS PGA TOUR 98

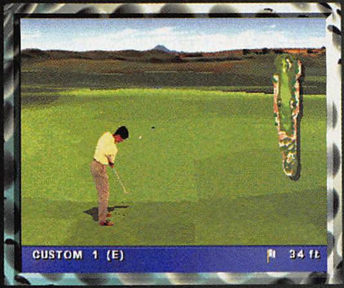
It's time to break out the Calloways, and see who the real sultans of swing are. Everyone's hittin' the sticks these days, and *PGA Tour 98* is the first one to to tee-off on the PlayStation this year. EA has had the foresight to acquire a license to the prestigious Pebble Beach Links, the godzilla of golf courses. Everyone that plays golf has a burning desire to play Pebble Beach at least once in their lifetime, and in swoops EA to provide that chance. So bust out the clubs and hit the greens—it's time for some golf, EA-style!

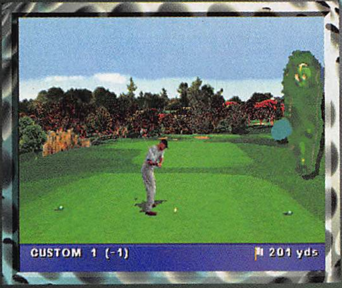
I've always been a fan of the sport, but I've only taken a marginal interest in the vid game renditions throughout the years. However, one thing that strikes me as odd is that there's really nothing dramatically different about this game over past renditions. With all the revolutions in hot 3D engines, amazing real-time rendering and countless other industry buzz-words, I've grown a little weary of the old fashioned, swing-o-meter-type golf EA has been pushing year in year out for time immemorial (well, maybe it's not *that* bad). I can't imagine going out and paying for a game like this unless you're the type of guy that just has to have every golf game in existence (you know who you are, golf junkies). For me access the expendable cash fund it has to be something new and exciting—this one's really starting to show its age.





For starters, though, EA has never been accused of not having enough features and options. They've always stacked all their titles with tons of extras. The inclusion of Pebble Beach alone is enough for most golf enthusiasts, but for those of us that are looking for some major changes in gameplay, well, the quest continues. If, however, you were content with last year's gameplay, the addition of 3 new play modes should make you more than happy. They include: Skills Match, Two Match Play, and Fourballs and Foursomes (8 in all), then you'll be ecstatic with *PGA Tour 98*. The match play action puts you up against 14 top PGA Tour pros, but unfortunately Woods and some of the other big names are absent once again (ah the vagaries of licensing deals). We do have the same old Jacobsen, Faxon and Davis Love III (as usual).





What I'm looking for is not going to be found in more ways to set up and read the shot, nor in extra options. They've got those parts down like no one else, and anymore complexities they add to the actual swing (and countless options) may end up killing long-term playability. They really need to put more emphasis on player attributes, lie of the course, environmental conditions, and pressure situations; these aspects have never really been factors in the *PGA* series, and they need to be brought to the forefront going into the next generation of golf games. *PGA Tour* lacks a certain human element, and ends up feeling too mechanical and unimpressive. They have their work cut out for them in the coming year.

Everyone's hittin' the sticks these days, and PGA Tour 98 is the first one to to tee-off on the PlayStation this year.

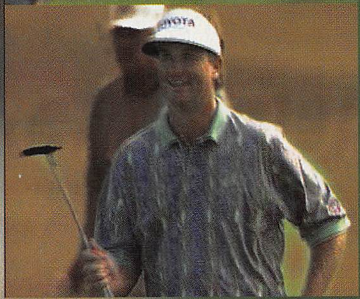






Kid Fan celebrates a quadruple bogie!





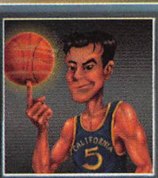
Although I must admit to getting wrapped up in the Skins competition, I started to feel a pang of uneasiness as Mark O'Meara and I squared off in a little competition, with my highlight of the game coming on the 7th hole. It was a beautiful par 3 overlooking the Pacific Ocean, where the hole descended several levels below the tee. We had pushed the 4 previous holes, and now $100,000 was riding on number 7. I put my drive less than 3 feet from the cup, but of course, I did take a mulligan, then sank the putt for a bird. O'Meara wasn't so lucky as his ball rolled off the left fringe into the rough, where he had to chip up and one putt for par—just a casual $100K...

The commentary of Ernie Johnson, Jr. really adds to the *PGA Tour* flavor. Coupled with the TV-style presentation, multiple camera angles and perspectives, you're never left in the dark. However, you are left waiting...and waiting and waiting. The incessant amount of load time for a game that is already notoriously slow is just too painful to endure for 9 holes, let alone 18... and no, 'painful' is not an exaggeration. Who has time for it? College students, maybe. Perhaps they should have labeled it 'Patience Mode', then we might be able to benefit from it. As it stands, though...pain. ***JK***

GAMEFAN SPORTS R REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - EA	# OF PLAYERS - 1-4
PUBLISHER - EA	DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - FALL



JOE KIDD
Molasses slow...

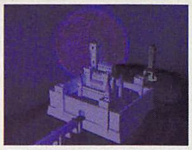

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Instead of the usual assortment of reviews and previews, we've got a couple of specials this month. One is a report from the Tokyo Game Show, beginning on page 154. But to kick things off, we have the first in-depth look at the hotly anticipated PlayStation *Metal Gear Solid*, the Nintendo 64 *Castlevania 3D*, and a couple other new surprises. Konami was kind enough to escort us on a visit of their Tokyo and Osaka offices, and give us behind-the-scenes access to the actual development teams that are hard at work on these titles. Thanks to our hosts and all of the interviewees!

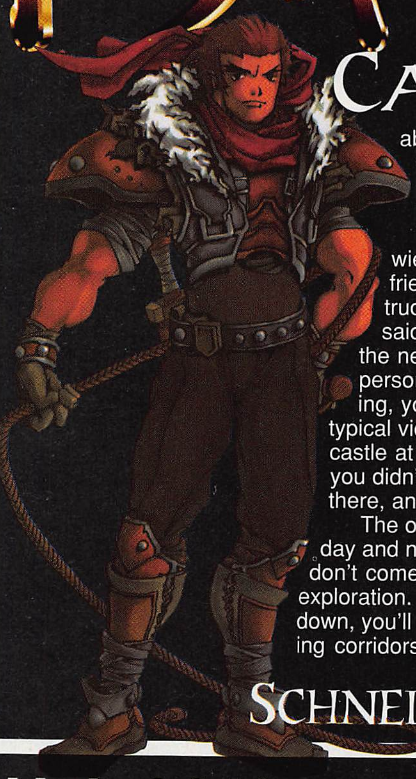






ドラキュラ3D

Castlevania 3D



Schneider Belmont

It's hard to visualize a *Castlevania* in 3D, and even harder to visualize a *Castlevania* with no candles, no hearts, and completely new play mechanics. The few shots we have to show aren't going to help much, as they come from very early development versions of the game, and tell us very little about how the final will look and play. Fortunately, we had an opportunity to ask the developers at Konami of Kobe ourselves, who were able to shed more than a little light on what is sure to be one of 1998's most talked about titles. From what we've learned, *Castlevania 3D* is clearly not an attempt to simply convert the *Castlevania* series' well-known play mechanics into 3D form, but is instead a whole new game, rich with dozens of new systems and concepts that have never before appeared in the series

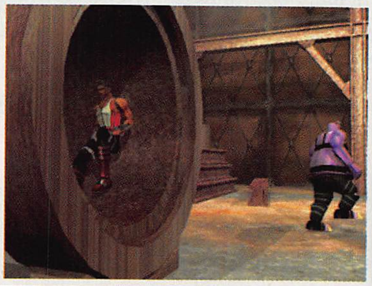
When you begin *C3D*, you'll have a choice of four characters: Schneider, the brand new, whip-wielding Belmont; Cornell, an escaped prisoner, martial arts master, and werewolf (I wonder if he's friends with Gallon/J.Talbain?); spell-casting schoolgirl Carrie Eastfield; and the android Corler, who trudges through the game with a chainsaw in one hand and a shotgun in the other. The characters are said to be drastically different, with each possessing completely different weapons, moves, and uses of the new special bar that charges as they defeat enemies. Even more interesting are the differences in personality... Each character is entering Dracula's castle with a different agenda, and to get their best ending, you'll have to play them as close to their character as possible, and they're not all going to be your typical video game hero "Goody Two-Shoes" types. No matter who you choose, all four will be entering the castle at the same time, so you can expect to meet up with the ones you didn't choose. You won't be able to control them, but they'll all be there, and they won't all be on your side.

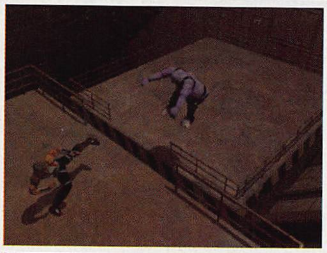


The other big new system is the introduction of a complete cycle of day and night. This figures prominently in the game, as most monsters don't come out during the day, leaving you brief periods of unimpeded exploration. But if you get caught in the wrong places when the sun goes down, you'll be in trouble. And a number of time-oriented puzzles, including corridors that open only during certain times of the day, insure that those who aren't using their wits as well as

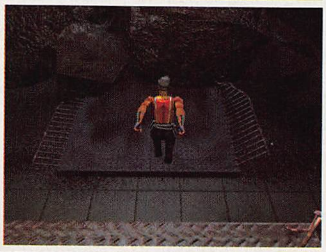
Hybrid Heaven

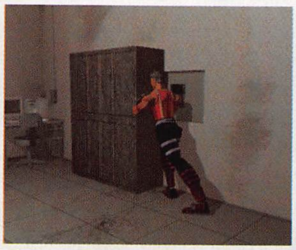
In *Hybrid Heaven*, you play as special agent Johnny Slater, a member of the first team to arrive at the site of a government biological test that has gone horribly wrong... Probably. The storyline, like everything else in *Hybrid Heaven*, is still under development. The game isn't even due until 1999, after all.

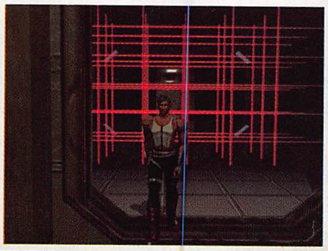




These shots are from a version of the game that is running on development system hardware, but the producer of *Hybrid Heaven* is confident that his team can create a game that looks as good as this, or even better. That promised level of graphic detail and *Hybrid Heaven*'s unique mix of adventure and RPG (including turn-based combat) elements are two reasons we'll be watching *Hybrid Heaven*'s development very closely.

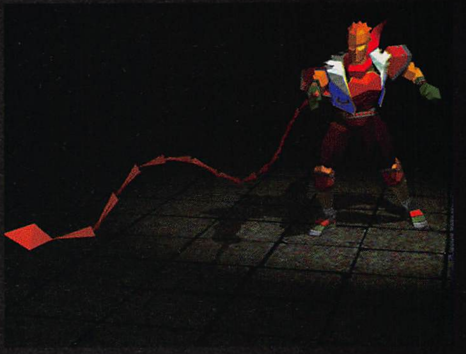




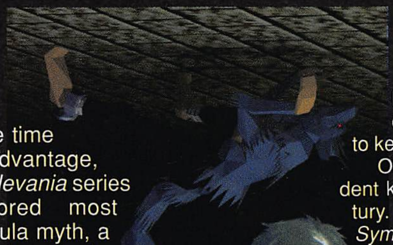








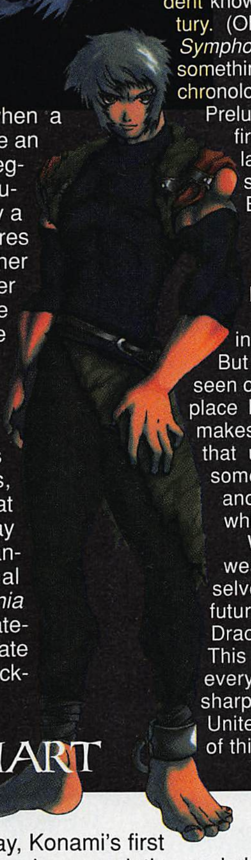


their reflexes will be stuck in the wrong place at the wrong time fairly frequently.

You can use the time system to your advantage, too. While the *Castlevania* series has always ignored most aspects of the Dracula myth, a lot of that will change in *Castlevania 3D*. For example, breaking open darkened windows when a vampire is in the sun's path will now be an effective means of attack. Vampiric legend will come into play in other intriguing ways as well. Characters bitten by a vampire won't die, but turn into vampires themselves, we've been told. Whether this effects the chosen player character or just the three NPCs remains to be seen, but either way it promises some interesting twists.

The game takes place entirely in one castle and the surrounding woods, as is generally *Castlevania* tradition. We've seen image renders of torture chambers, graveyards, chapels and other cheery locations that seem to suggest that while *C3D* may be innovating in terms of play mechanics, it's sticking to the traditional *Castlevania* mood. But will *Castlevania* make the grade in more important categories? We won't know for sure till late next year, but you can bet we'll be sticking with *C3D* every step of the way.



CORNELL REINHART

CONTINUITY CHECK

Japan Now is proud to present the following rambling Takuhi diatribe:

Ladies and gentlemen, we may have a problem. First of all, it's important not to panic. We're going to need to keep a clear head and work together to get through this. Okay, here's the situation. As every public school student knows, Dracula's castle can appear only once a century. (Oh, sure, occasionally an anomaly happens, like in *Symphony of the Night*, but how often can we count on something like that?) The first game in the *Castlevania* chronology is the not-yet-released GameBoy "Dark Night Prelude," in which Sonia Belmont fights Dracula in his first appearance (he was supposedly born in 1431) late in the 15th century. The next game in the series is thus *Castlevania III*, in which the reigning Belmont, Trevor (Ralph in Japan), smites Dracula on his second visit to our world. Simon Belmont's familiar reign, chronicled in the first two *Castlevania*s, comes next, and then a century later, we get Richter Belmont from the *X* series.

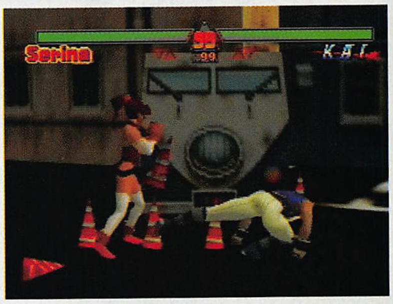
That places Schneider's quest, as chronicled in *C3D*, somewhere near 1890. So far so good. But what, my friends, of the future? Barring unforeseen circumstances, the next Castlevania will be taking place here in the 1990's, the mere thought of which makes me shudder with fear. Even worse, that means that unless Konami wants to turn *Castlevania* into some sort of futuristic sci-fi series, they can't release another *Castlevania* until late in the 21st century, by which time we'll all be dead.

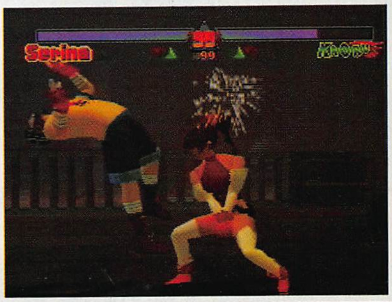
Whatever can we do? Can Konami somehow weasel out of the once-a-century rule they themselves created? Or are we doomed to play cheesy futuristic *Castlevania* games in which Belmonts fight Dracula in space with laser whips and jetpacks? This is a problem we cannot ignore! I urge each and every able-bodied young *Castlevania* fan to write a sharply-worded letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and demand that he get to the bottom of this. Thank you, and good night.

G.A.S.P.

While *Hybrid Heaven* and *Castlevania* are each nearly a year away, Konami's first original Nintendo 64 fighting game is nearing completion and should be ready to ship this year.

Similar to PlayStation import *Lightning Legend*, *G.A.S.P.* is a fairly typical 3D fighter with a few twists. For one, you can interact with a variety of objects placed in the ring, everything from tire stacks to parked cars. Some items do extra damage when you're knocked against them (walls and stuff), and others (like the tires) actually act to cushion the blows when you're thrown into them. The game's even rumble pack compatible, so you can feel the actual experience of being smashed into an actual VW bus, something I haven't enjoyed since the carefree days of my youth ("No Daddy, no!" Er, sorry). Anyway, look for it soon!










The buzz on Metal Gear Solid has been growing steadily since it was first announced at the Spring Tokyo Game Show. It's not hard to see why—a much beloved NES classic being revived after 10 years for the PlayStation, and being directed by one of the game industry's most legendary figures. That buzz reached a fever pitch at this year's E3 when Konami unveiled a two-minute video tape that revealed not only the game's expected design strengths, but also showed off a level of graphic detail never before seen on the PlayStation. The astonishing visuals led to some speculation that the game wasn't even running on PlayStation hardware yet. So Konami invited us to visit the developer, KCEJ, and see for ourselves. The trip proved that not only was Metal Gear Solid completely for real, but that what we had been shown was only the tip of the iceberg...

TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION

METAL GEAR SOLID

Metal Gear remains true to its roots, as a game of stealth and strategy. Which is not to say you can't mow down lots of guards with machine guns, blow them away in massive chain explosions, and send remote controlled missiles straight at their dirty bits. It's just that it's not always wise to.



In the mission we saw, Solid Snake dashed from crate to crate, hiding behind stairwells and under desks, as he planted C4 explosives in various parts of an enemy warehouse. The tension was high as guards walked only a few feet past Solid Snake's hiding places, exhaling steamy breath in the cold Alaska air and stretching frequently (the game's attention to detail is amazing). But the enemy AI is right on target, so as long as Snake could stay out of their line of vision and not make any noise, he remained undetected. When necessary, he'd approach unavoidable guards from behind, slit their throats, and drag them to a place where their bodies would hopefully not be discovered.

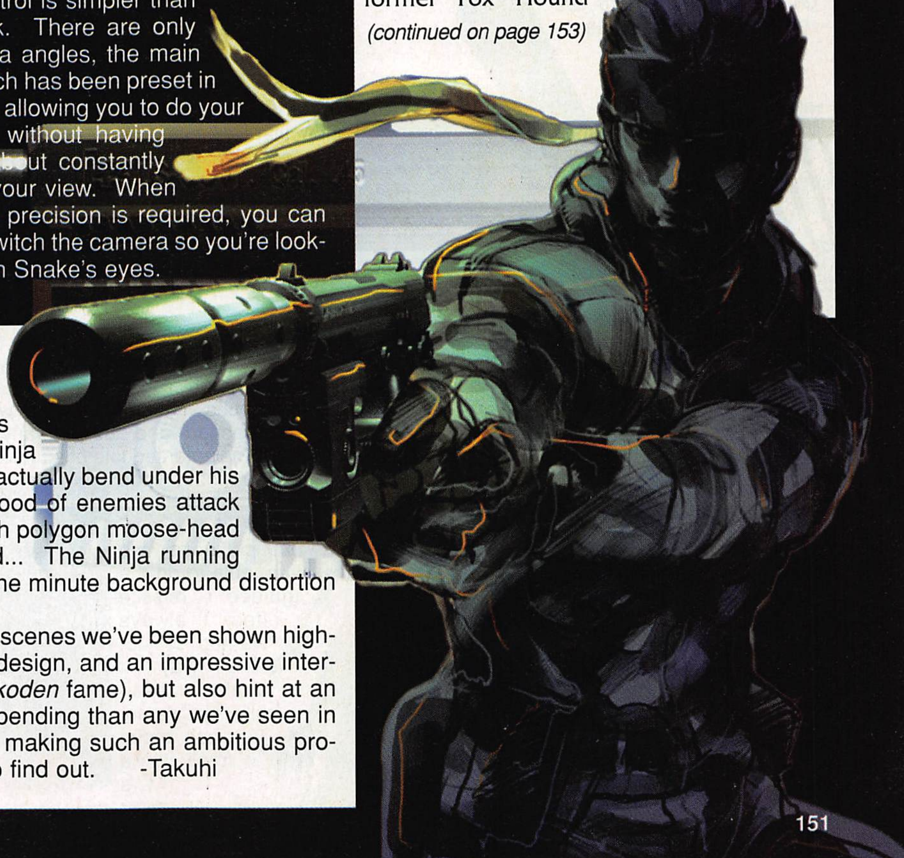


But eventually even Solid Snake slips up, and that's when the action begins. The old *Metal Gear 1* exclamation point pops up over the enemy's head, the previously placid (yet somehow tense) soundtrack kicks into high gear, and, if you're really unlucky, alarms start blaring. Snake's repertoire of basic moves includes a healthy variety of punches, throws, and kicks, and the ultra-cool ability of using fallen opponents' bodies as shields against enemy bullets. With that and a dozen cool weapons of his own, Snake managed to get out alive, set off his bombs, and watch as the chain reaction sent explosions blasting through the entire warehouse, killing the guards who had survived Solid Snake's onslaught.





The control is simpler than you'd think. There are only two camera angles, the main one of which has been preset in each area, allowing you to do your dirty work without having to worry about constantly adjusting your view. When a bit more precision is required, you can instantly switch the camera so you're looking through Snake's eyes.

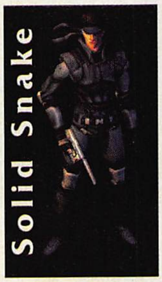


As amazing as *Metal Gear Solid* looked, it's only a little more than halfway done. But the scenes shown on videotape already look astounding: Solid Snake firing wildly in an office building, shattering windows and sending reams of paper flying, while the ninja dodges his bullets by jumping onto office chairs that actually bend under his weight... Solid and Meryl firing back-to-back as a flood of enemies attack from both sides of a lodge-like building (complete with polygon moose-head trophies in the background), pausing only to reload... The Ninja running down a corridor full of corpses, visible only through the minute background distortion caused by his cloaking device (an amazing effect)...

Basically, *Metal Gear Solid* looks astounding. The scenes we've been shown highlight not only amazing graphics, excellent character design, and an impressive interactive soundtrack (by Tappy of *Policenauts* and *Suikoden* fame), but also hint at an adventure more challenging, engrossing, and brain-bending than any we've seen in the action category. Can Kojima's team succeed in making such an ambitious project a reality? We'll have to wait 'til Summer 1998 to find out. -Takuhi

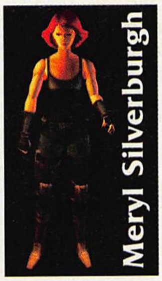


Back Story


Solid Snake

With digital comic masterpieces *Snatcher* and *Policenauts* to his credit, Hideo Kojima is famous for his stories. While *Metal Gear Solid* will obviously be emphasizing the action elements, it will also feature the fully involved storyline Kojima fans have come to expect.

The game takes place in Alaska, in the year 2005. Our hero, Solid Snake, is sent to a heavily guarded outpost where terrorists have gotten ahold of nuclear weaponry, and have built another Metal Gear, a mobile mech/tank-thingy capable of launching nuclear missiles. They have given the world 24 hours to meet their demands, or they'll plunge the world into a nuclear holocaust.

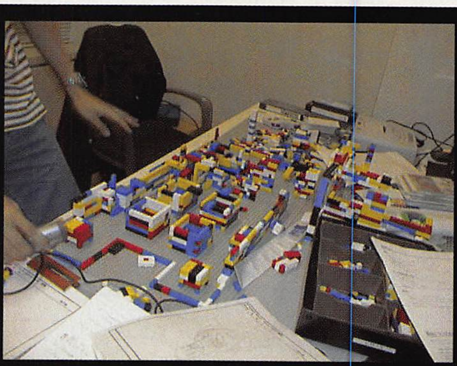

Meryl Silverburgh

Solid Snake is at a definite disadvantage here... While he has a full team of fellow Fox Hound (the name of his secret special anti-terrorist organization) members behind him, the terrorists are already familiar with all his tactics... Their leader is Liquid Snake, also a former Fox Hound

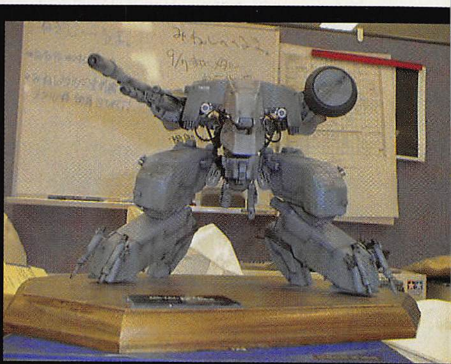
(continued on page 153)



On the right is game producer Hideo Kojima, the subject of this interview. Beside him is Art Director Yoji Shinkawa, the man responsible for the stunning artwork in this layout.



Before constructing the levels, the team makes models out of Legos. This is the floorplan for an underground warehouse we actually saw in the game (albeit less brightly colored).



This stunning Metal Gear model was constructed from scratch by Mr. Shinkawa himself. It was used as a guide when the actual mech was being computer modeled.

It was my understanding that all of your team's previous games were originally developed for Japanese PC formats. Why did you choose to develop on the PlayStation, and how was the experience different?

Hideo Kojima: I really don't care at all about which hardware I develop on. The original *Metal Gear* came out on the MSX (computer system) ten years ago. There were lots of things I wanted to do with the ideas I had [for *Metal Gear*], but of course the things I wanted to do and the things the hardware were capable of doing didn't quite match up, and I was really only able to do about 20% of what I wanted... When I started to hear the rumors about the PlayStation and what it would be capable of, I started to think that maybe I could create a much better *Metal Gear* with this; that with this hardware I could do the things I wanted to do but couldn't do before...

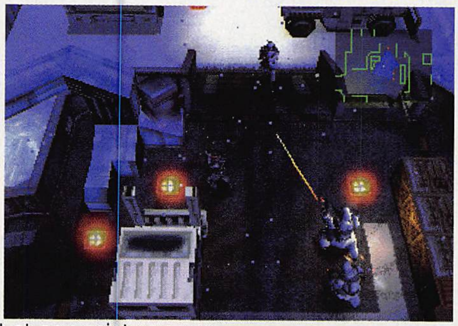
And what percent were you able to achieve this time?

HK: About 60% (laughs).

I've noticed that Meryl from* Policenauts *appears in this game, and that there are references to* Metal Gear *in* Snatcher. *Do you consider all of your games to take place in the same universe?

HK: No, they're completely different. As for Meryl, I really liked her in *Policenauts*, and so I've made her Solid Snake's partner in *Metal Gear Solid*.

I was working on *Policenauts* at the same time that I was doing the initial planning for *Metal Gear Solid*, so that's sort of where she came from (laughs).

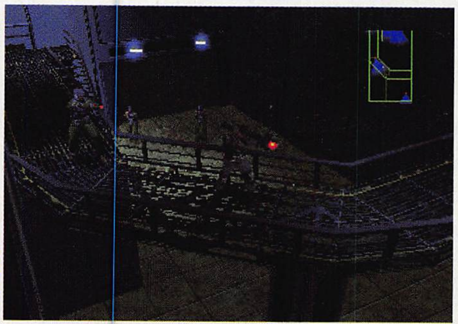


What are you doing about the camera angles?

HK: About 80% of the game the camera angle will be from above. But at any point you can bring the camera to the player's viewpoint, and manipulate it freely from that perspective.

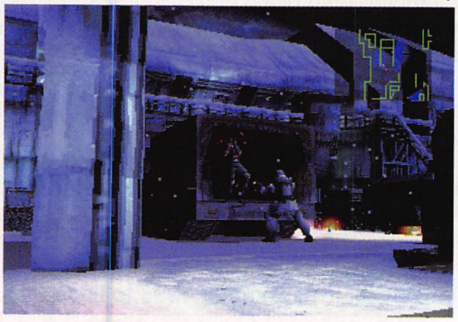
Obviously,* Metal Gear Solid *borrows a lot from previous* Metal Gear *games. Will you start with nothing in MGS, as in previous games?

HK: Yes. I guess it's kind of a strange for a special ops mission, but the player begins with nothing. Just his cigarettes (laughs). Oh, and binoculars. But you can take enemies' weapons and armor and get stronger as you go.



Are there more weapons then there were in the previous titles?

HK: Yes. There were lots of things we couldn't do before but we can do now with the 3D polygon graphics. For example, now you can use scopes mounted on your weapons to zoom ahead and look in any direction. We've implemented lots of stuff like that. Do you remember the guided missile from the first *Metal Gear*? With polygons, we were able to do the guided missile effect I always wanted to do. The way it works is basically the same, you can move it freely while it's in the air, but if you use the first-person perspective view while using the missile, you can see things from the missile's viewpoint.



I had heard that Mr. Kojima and his team came to America to study SWAT team tactics. What sort of things did they learn, and how are they implemented in the game?

HK: There are lots of little things, the various costumes, armors, weapons, strategies... But the biggest thing was when we saw the SWAT teams in their training exercises, I was very impressed by the feeling of tension, and we've tried to capture that intensity in the game.

Of course, we had previous only seen them in movies, books, and television. Seeing the actual SWAT teams in action, I realized how very different they are from those portrayals, and how difficult it would be to create real SWAT action in a game. I think the action in *Metal Gear Solid* falls right in the middle between the "real" SWAT and the "entertainment" SWAT (laughs).

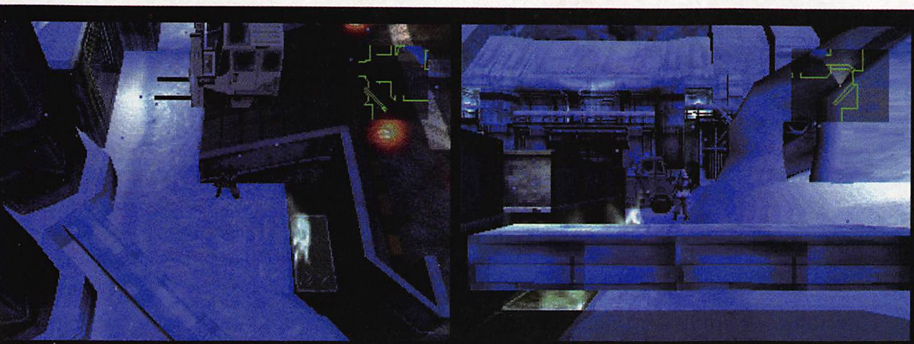
It's like when people are sent flying by explosions in movies and TV. I don't think that that would happen in a real explosion... But those scenes in which people are being lifted away from explosions in slow motion, pulled forward by wires, that's the reality we've learned from movies and such. While working on *Metal Gear*, I've been trying to maintain a balance between actual reality and that fake, cinematic reality. I thought about putting in polygon wires to hold up the characters as they get blown back by explosions (laughs).

How many people are involved in the development of this game, and how long has it been in the works?

HK: We have a staff of only about twenty people. *Metal Gear Solid* has been in actual



This interview was conducted in a "round table" format, and the questions were asked by many different members of the US gaming press. Thanks to all who participated! T



These shots show the same basic area in the two selectable viewpoints. With the default view (left) you use pre-established camera angles designed to be most fitting for the task at hand. But at any time you can also choose to see things through Solid Snake's eyes (right), for a closer look at your surroundings. You can only move in the default view.



development for about a year, but we've really been planning it since we were working on *Policenauts*. It's by the same team.

For such a major title, twenty people seems like a small staff, doesn't it?

HK: That's my personal preference. As a leader, I need to know what everyone's working on, know everyone's face, know when one of my people are sick or unhappy. I can't watch over 100 people (laughs).

When do you think your game will be ready to ship in the US?

HK: When we showed it at the E3, I was happy that it got such good reviews. I feel really good about the American marketplace. I think that I'd like to release it at the same time as the Japanese version [Summer '98], or just a tiny bit after. I wish I could actually release it first! But the script is huge, and it's all in voice... The translation might take a while.

However long it takes, I'm sure it will be well worth the wait! Thank you!



(continued from page 151)

member (and a man whose existence begs the question: "Is there also a Gaseous Snake?" And if so, eww). His army of henchmen includes such whimsically named characters as Revolver Ocelot, Psycho Mantis, and Decoy Octopus.

There are also a number of mysterious wild cards, including an arms manufacturer apparently taken hostage by the terrorists, and the unnamed mysterious ninja who seems to be both friend and foe to Solid Snake. How the story will ultimately play out is anyone's guess.



Revolver Ocelot

Enigmatic Ninja



Autumn 1997: Makuhari, Japan

Tokyo Game Show Report

The Saturn is firmly entrenched in the #2 spot in Japan, where it's being outsold by PlayStations by as much as 10:1. Sega's actually turning their second place spot into an advantage, by emphasizing niche products and launching a new advertising campaign that stresses how hip, cool and unique Saturn games are. As their showing indicated, it's more than just hype! Sega's booth was full of innovative Saturn titles, as were the booths of ESP, Enix, and many other third parties. With a lot of surprises and a great holiday season ahead, Sega had a great show.

Grandia

As everyone who has played the Prelude knows, *Grandia* is all that and then some. The only question is: "WHEN!?" This show finally provided the answer: *Grandia* will be available everywhere (in Japan) on December 18th! Pray for no more delays...

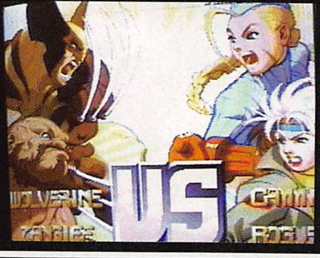


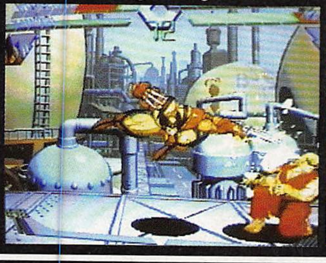




X-Men vs. Street Fighter

XMvSF is the first 4-meg cartridge compatible game (it's included, and still under $70!), and it's an astounding conversion, with 100% of the frames and no little loading time when you switch characters. Even the initial load is lightning fast! Should be out in November.

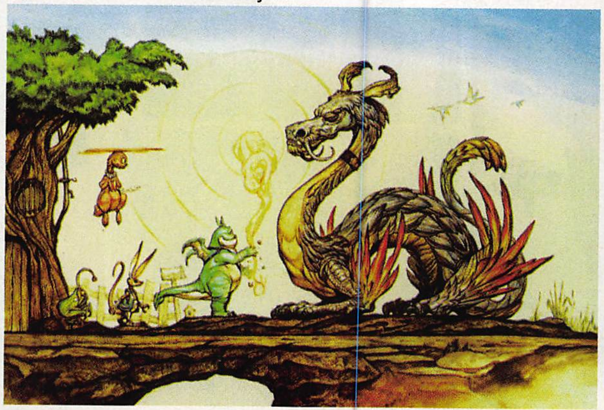


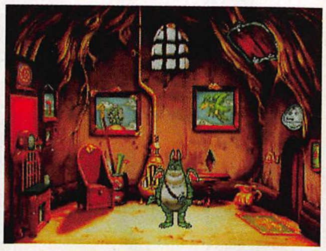




Island of the Seven Winds

Enix's first Saturn title (due in late November) is an incredibly captivating adventure crafted by the people who brought us the *Wonder Project J* series. The animation is beyond belief, the character design is fantastic, and the quest (in which you befriend the many strange creatures in your world, and use their abilities to solve puzzles) is both charming and unique. *Seven Winds* is one of the most innovative adventures I've seen in years.







For every Tokyo Game Show, there is a different piece of image art, drawn by a different artist. This year's official piece, pictured above, was drawn by Akira Creator Katsuhiro Otomo. In a transparent attempt to make the artists feel important, the show coordinators also let the artist pick the "theme" for that particular show. The results are usually side-splittingly funny in their pretentiousness, crap like "pondering our place in the digital world."

I don't know what Otomo came up with, but the theme of this show was obvious to me: "We, the Japanese video game industry (Square excepted), apologize for having such a sucky year in 1996, and promise to make up for it by dumping 30,000 A+ titles on the market in the months of November and December."

Yep, unlike the relatively dull Spring show, this show was chock full of goodness. Over 300 games were shown, but since I don't want to write about such games as "Capricious My Baby," "Let's Make a School!!," and "Tonic Trouble" any more than you want to read about them, I'm just gonna cut out all but the cream of the crop and divvy up my 5 pages accordingly. And with the vast majority of those A-list games due in late November and December, we import buyers will have a jolly holiday season indeed. *Takuhi*



Burning Rangers

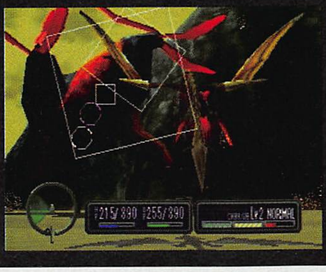
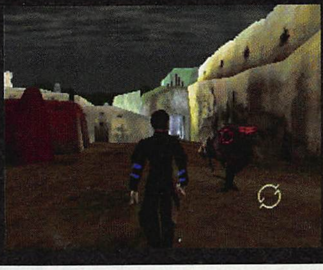
After years of making *Sonic* sequel after *Sonic* sequel, Sonic Team is suddenly bursting with great ideas. *Burning Rangers* bears absolutely no relation to *Sonic* or *Nights*, save for its slickly intuitive play control and dazzling visuals. In *BR*, you play as a member of the elite Burning Rangers fire-fighting team, extinguishing gorgeous fires in a number of futuristic locations. The mechanics are very simple (two buttons, jump and shoot), but the unlimited double jumps, huge levels (with lots of freedom to explore) and the unpredictable nature of your enemy (doors are constantly being blown open by backdrafts and such) make for a gaming experience like no other. Producers Yuji Naka and Naoto Oshima's next masterpiece ships early next year.






Panzer Dragoon Azel

The playable demo of *Panzer Azel* was basically the same as the one that was shown at the E3, but a new videotape tantalized viewers with brand new scenes from much later in the game. Unfortunately, we weren't given any images from this tape, so you'll have to take my word for it when I say that *PDA* looks as if it'll be making the same graphical quantum leap that we saw in the previous two *Panzer Dragoon*s. There's still no date on this 4 CD RPG epic, but sources are hinting at a December release (it's scheduled for February in the US). This, *Grandia*, and *Shining Force 3* in one month!? It's almost *too* much.


Sonic R

Looking better and better!

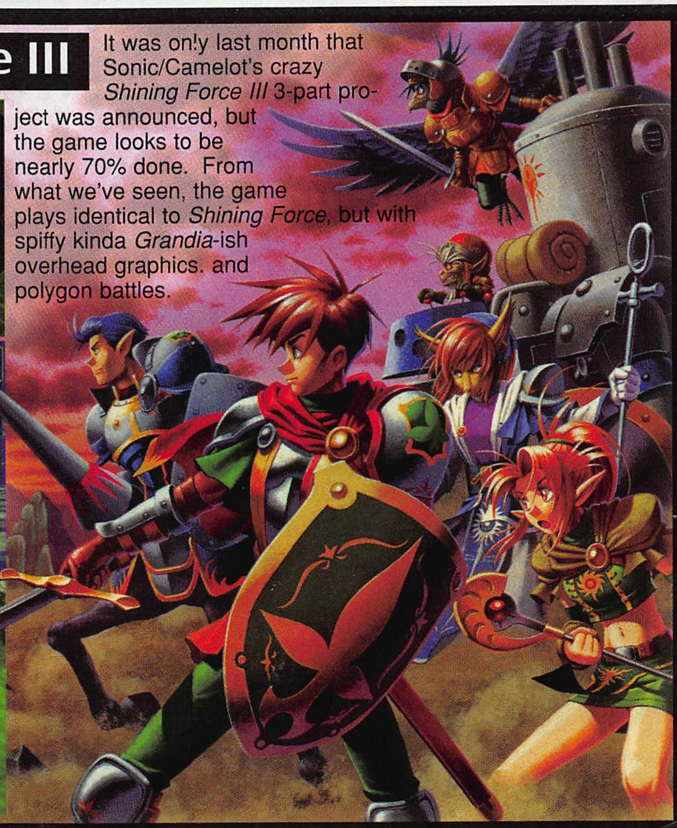




Shining Force III

It was only last month that Sonic/Camelot's crazy *Shining Force III* 3-part project was announced, but the game looks to be nearly 70% done. From what we've seen, the game plays identical to *Shining Force*, but with spiffy kinda *Grandia*-ish overhead graphics. and polygon battles.



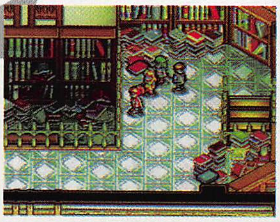





Lunar Magic School

The graphics may not be so astounding, but *LMS* is as close as we're gonna be getting to an original game for some time. The game does feature a neat episodic style, a cool magic-heavy battle system (in which you can combine the various students' spells), great opening animation, and a new Iwadare soundtrack, so this fourth ESP release should be a definite purchase for *Lunar* fans when it hits Japanese store shelves on November 20th.





Lunar Eternal Blue



Kadokawa Shoten's second *Lunar* remake project has finally resurfaced! *Lunar Eternal Blue* may not have completely redrawn graphics, or a new soundtrack, but it will feature another 45 minutes of that insane *Silver Star Story* animation quality. The game will also feature a couple new dungeons that were cut from the original, because GameArts claims "the Sega-CD couldn't handle them." What could that possibly mean? We'll have to wait 'til next year to find out.



Arcana Strikes

Okay, the category is potpourri, the system is Saturn: Go! *Arcana Strikes* is the new RPG from Takara, produced by Red's Hiroi Ohji. It's a nice-looking game that has a battle system that uses collectible spell cards, over 300 of 'em, like that crazy *Magic: The Gathering.*



Astra Superstars

Astra Superstars is Sunsoft's new air combat-based fighter, by the *Waku Waku 7* team. It uses the 4-meg RAM cartridge for lovely animation and has the same cool anime style.



Cotton 2

Cotton 2 is a lovely new shooter that's also a Saturn hardware-based arcade title.



Soul Hackers

Soul Hackers is the sequel to 1995's *Devil Summoner*, the first Megami Tensei game on the Saturn. Should be huge, comes out in November. Phew! Glad that's over. Time for snacks.



PlayStation

Sony can brag of having an estimated million billion trillion 3rd party licensees in Japan, but the Autumn game show proved yet again that except for Square, Capcom, Namco and Konami and one or two others, they should pretty much all be shot. With Capcom and Namco showing only games that we already know all about (Namco did promise to unveil PS *Tekken 3*, but apparently pulled it out at the last minute), and Konami focusing on their chick game line-up, the task of generating PlayStation excitement was left pretty much solely on Square's shoulders. Fortunately, they had absolutely no problem succeeding. Other notable developments:

Nectaris

If you remember the original PC Engine *Nectaris*, released in the states as *Military Madness*, give yourself a gold star. If you don't, I'll educate you: Hudson's *Nectaris* games, which depicted a civil war on the moon, were easily the best turn-based strategy games in existence until the *Tactics* series came along. Now Hudson's reviving it on the PS, with fresh, lovely polygon graphics! Hot!

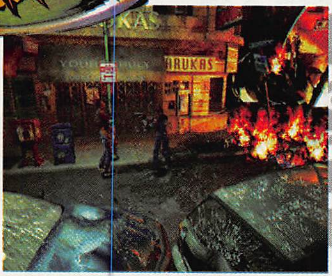


Samurai Spirits IV



What does the PlayStation version of *Samurai IV* have that the Neo and Saturn versions don't? If you answered framey movement and lots of slowdown, you're probably right. But if you answered "playable Cham Cham," you'd also be right! Yep, Cham Cham is playable, exclusive in this version! No word yet as to what extent she's been changed since her first (and last) appearance in *Shin Samurai Spirits*.

Biohazard 2



Capcom's booth featured a cool live *Biohazard* horror show, complete with lots of footage from the game, included a horrifyingly huge alligator prowling Raccoon City's sewers. Even more exciting, we finally have a release month: January! Lovely!

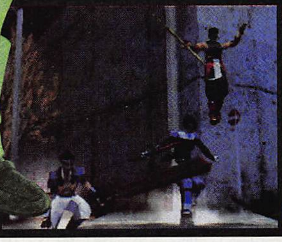


Soukaigi

Programmed by Yuke's (famous for wrestling games), *Soukaigi* was Square's surprise announcement at the show. This bizarre-looking title is an action game featuring something like 16 different playable characters, all casting spells and running around at lightning speeds as they fight weird mutations in post-apocalyptic modern Japan. Although it's pixelly as hell, the game looks beautiful and incredibly unique. The music is by *Seiken Densetsu* (*Secret of Mana*) composer Hiroki Kikuta and features a 40-piece, Japanese style orchestra. Another likely December title.









Xenogears

Xenogears is the only straight RPG on Square's release list (remember when they *only* made RPGs?), but it looks strong enough to keep us busy 'til *FF8*, or whatever else they have down the line. The real-time polygon rendered overworld is beautiful (I wish we could show you more of it, but Square wouldn't give us any pictures), and the hand-drawn characters and enemies are well animated and fit in perfectly. The battle system is highly reminiscent of *Chrono Trigger* (except for the big robots) and the music actually is by *Chrono Trigger* composer Yasunori Matsuda, and should be lovely. *Xenogears* was fully playable at the show and seemed to be nearly finished, making this another likely candidate for a year end release



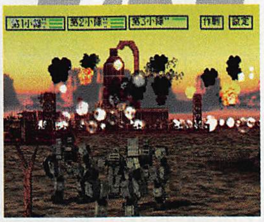


Front Mission Alternative

Delayed indefinitely so Square "can tweak the play mechanics," the first real-time *Front Mission* game looks great (and finished). But can the marketplace make room for another *Front Mission* so soon after *FM2*?







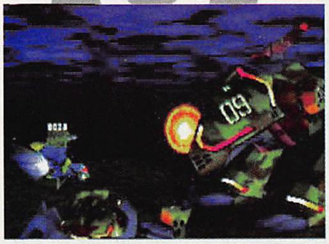
Chocobo's Mysterious Dungeon

I'll be frank with you–I don't like the *Mysterious Dungeon* series of games. But this game looks beautiful, with dazzling spell effects and gorgeous FMV sequences. Even better, Kouichi Sugiyama's soundtrack grabs you by your shirt collar, lifts you completely off the ground, and pummels you savagely with the most beautiful music you'll ever hear. I don't know if they'll fix the series' boring play mechanics or not, but I don't even really care. I'd stand in line for hours to buy this one for the graphics and music alone. Thank you, Kouichi, for making us laugh, cry, etc.



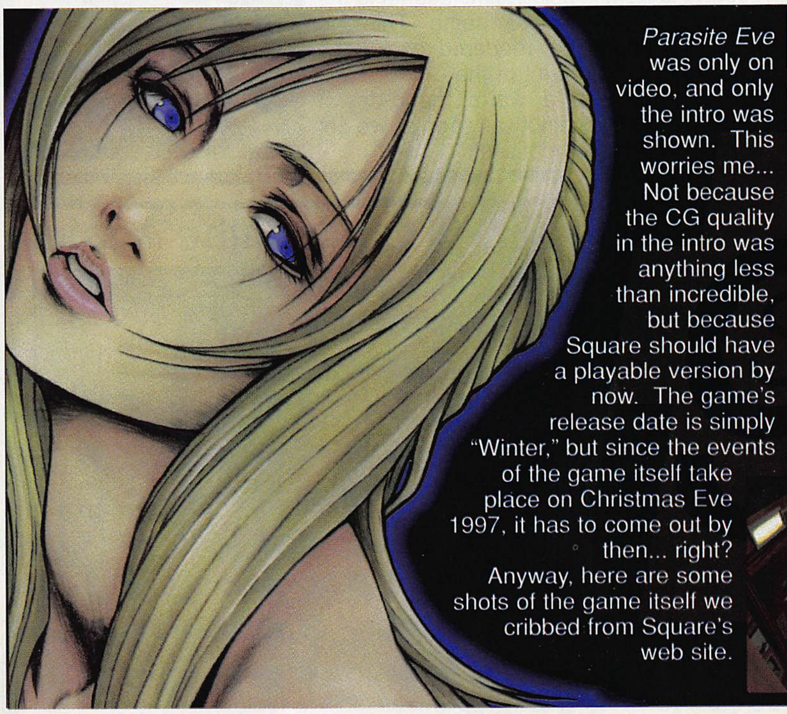
Einhander

Horizontally-scrolling "non-break" shooting from Square. *Einhander* has *Philosoma*-quality graphics, but with actual play mechanics! Comes out November 20th, should be fab!

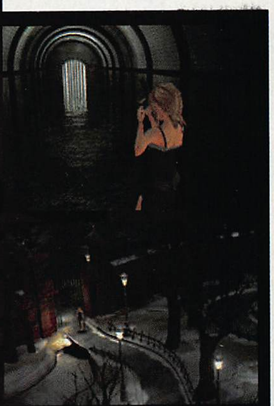


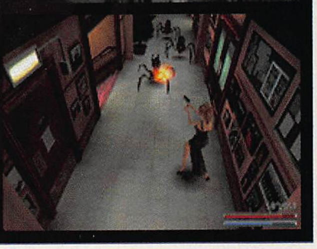


Parasite Eve



Parasite Eve was only on video, and only the intro was shown. This worries me... Not because the CG quality in the intro was anything less than incredible, but because Square should have a playable version by now. The game's release date is simply "Winter," but since the events of the game itself take place on Christmas Eve 1997, it has to come out by then... right? Anyway, here are some shots of the game itself we cribbed from Square's web site.

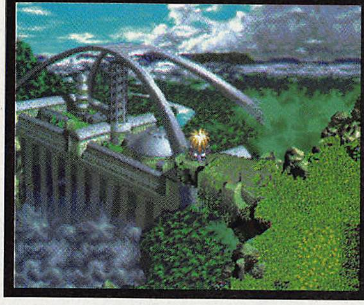




Tales of Destiny

Hey, this is the best looking Super Famicom I've ever seen! Too bad it's on the PlayStation... Yep, this *Tales of Phantasia* sequel looks like a straight 16-bit port (strange considering it *is* an original PS game), but at least it has a neat story, fun systems, and a nice soundtrack!





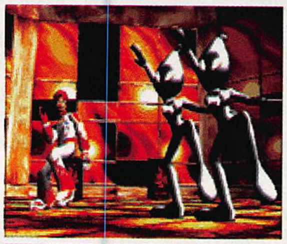



Star Ocean Second Story





Bust A Move





There was a time when one would be hard-pressed to even think of a sentence in which the words "Enix" and "fruit" would both be used. Now it's hard not to, as fully half of their E3 line-up was quite simply hard-core fruit. I refer specifically to Saturn ninja penguin game *Ninpen Manmaru*, and PlayStation titles *Astro Noka*, *Eggs of Steel*, and *Bust A Move*.

But while the former three look crappy, *Bust A Move* actually looks *excellent*. This dance battle action game (the world's first, Enix brags, and no one can take *that* away from them) has stunning graphics (apparently using high-res mode), great character design, and a fanky concept as you attempt to out-dance your opponent in one of a number of dancing styles, including techno, hip hop, jazz, and "sexy." Think of it as a 3D fighting game with no physical contact.

The stoic, RPG-heavy Enix of old is represented by *Star Ocean 2*, the sequel to the last great Super Famicom game. This one features luscious pre-rendered backdrops (by Links, who did a lot of the CG for *Final Fantasy VII*) with a warm, hand-drawn touch. We'll let you know as soon as we get more info on these hot titles!

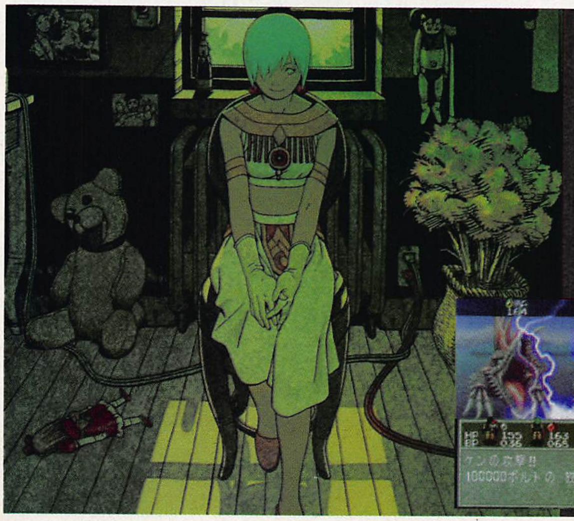
Granstream Saga

Supposedly this action-RPG, by new Sony contractee "Shade," was worked on by staff from RPG legends Falcom and Quintet. Unfortunately, the demo disc we played seemed a tad lame, as the game's poor overhead perspective made for generally bland graphics and restricted your vision to an unreasonable extent. The one-on-one battle system was great, though, and the final is said to feature excellent quality animation scenes. Out in November.






Linda Cube Again



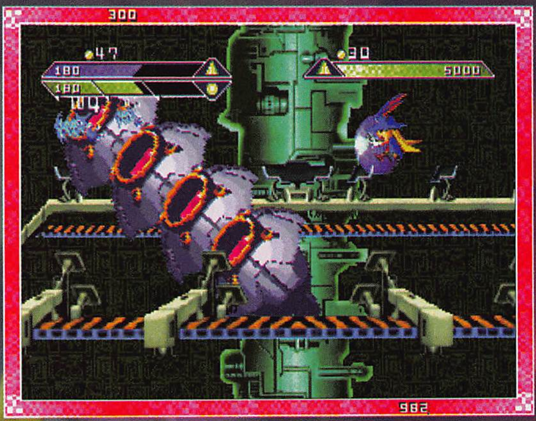
Since the PC Engine Super-CD format was on the wane when *Linda Cube* was originally released, not many people got a chance to play this trilogy (on one CD) of three uniquely depraved RPGs directed by *Tengai Makyo* creator Hiroi Ohji. This PS port, released by Sony, has redrawn battle graphics and new intermissions.







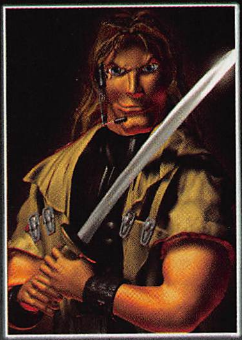

Silhouette Mirage




REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

- DEVELOPER - TREASURE
- PUBLISHER - SEGA JAPAN
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1
- DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED
- AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



E_STORM
***Silhouette**'s amazing, anyway you color it.*

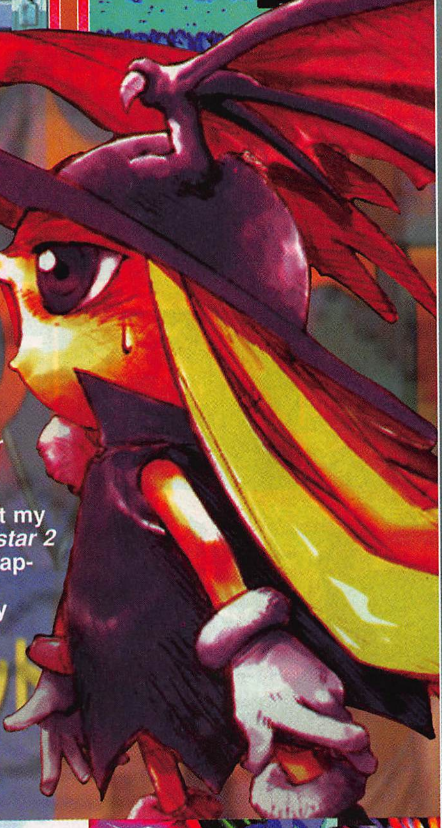


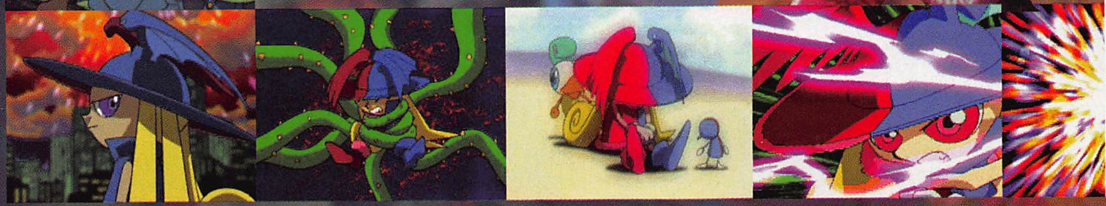




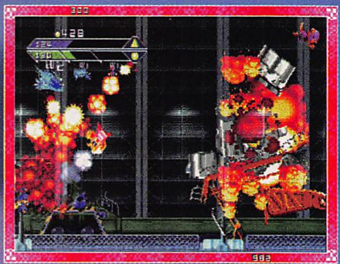

First, I will again proclaim that Treasure is one of my favorite game developers. They continue to bring on the action in a way only they can, never do sequels (I don't really like that part) and continue to amaze with some of the most imaginative gameplay in the known universe. That said, on we go with the E. Storm appraisal of *Silhouette Mirage*, what could be Treasure's last Saturn game. I presume they'll move onto the new NEC/Sega console but don't know for sure. The way SOA's treated them I wouldn't be surprised if they pitched their tent in the Sony camp. If I had it my way they'd do their 1st sequel... *Gunstar 2* on the Saturn. That certainly won't happen, so I'll just get on with it.

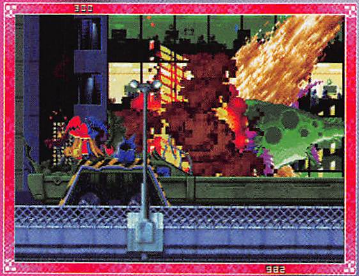
For what it's worth, here's the story of *Silhouette Mirage*. The year is 2XXX AD and judgement day has come and gone here on the planet Earth. A disaster caused by a system known only as "Ed" has divided all living things into two races with gender-specific attributes of either Silhouette or Mirage.







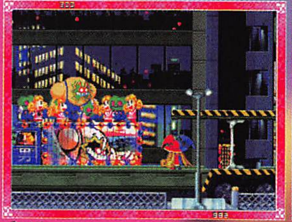


These new master races have powers far beyond those possessed by the Earth's previous inhabitants (us) and each species has its own ruler, who directs all underlying minions. The problem is an obvious one (a clever parable perhaps?): The two races do not see eye to eye and wars over who-rules-over-what (kind of like a global turf war) are rampant.

As the game begins, Shaina awakens from a long deep sleep. Shaina was created by the last remaining humans attempting to salvage their world. She is bred as half Silhouette and half Mirage. As she awakens she remembers her mission "find Ed, restore Earth." Knowing that one who could change the course of history has emerged, both races join efforts to prevent her from getting to Ed. Treasure doesn't just make games, they create races of people and outer-worldly incarnations. So do many companies I know, but you have to admit, Treasure is king of the twisted storyline.

This fantastic game, a medley of boss fighting ala *Alien Soldier* and platforming ala *Gunstar Heroes* revolves around Shaina's attack mechanism. She can acquire and power up any 3 of 7 weapons, upgrading them by collecting fallen change from beaten foes and proceeding to the nearest vendor. So, rather than roast all of the enemies from afar you must clutch them with Shaina's hair and beat the uh, money out of them until you have sufficient cash... then let go with fiery death! These smaller underlings live between mega-Treasure-style boss encounters the likes of which must be seen to be believed. Each is a blend of classical music and eclectic, yet somehow subtle violence that will rivet you to your seat.

The 7 weapons are all a joy as you watch them grow; however, you really need only upgrade the dragon beam for true pyrotechnic glory. This weapon

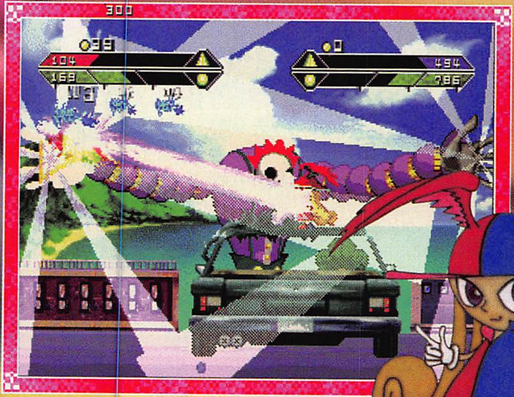




A Treasure staple: *Silhouette* is jammed with severely twisted characters.

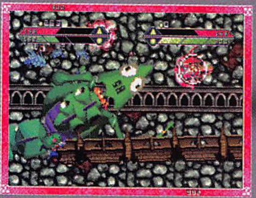



Silhouette, like all Treasure games, is big on play mechanics. Without segue you'll go from a chase maze, to a surprise moonlit encounter, to the unforgettable mobile mayhem at the bottom of this page. Don't even blink—you're in the Treasure zone!

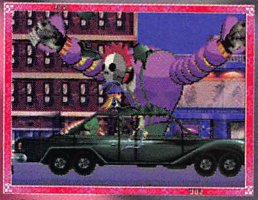








An unexpected ride around the block!!

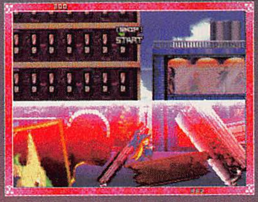




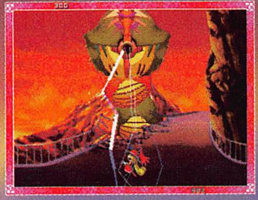




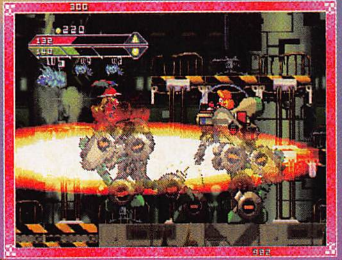










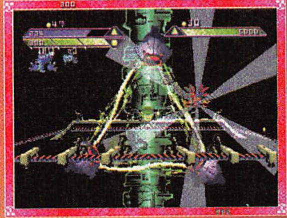
just rocks and will surely suffice over the long and difficult haul. You'll not master *Silhouette* the first time you play, and likely not the second, nor the third. Treasure has attempted and succeeded in creating a brilliant level of longevity, though I must admit that after my 5th or so go at the last boss even I was wishing for a save feature. I can't scold, though, for this forced longevity, as you the consumer will benefit by having to learn every nuance of this stellar performance before cracking it, and that's called getting your money's worth. The game is certainly worth exploring over and over (I just wish I could read it!).





Overall, *Silhouette*, like most Treasure games, is an experience that every Saturn owner should have the choice to take. It's a graphic feast and harbors one of the greatest soundtracks ever in a platformer. It's time for SOA to pull the nose rings outta their butts and get with the friggin' program. The new ad campaign is a gross crime against humanity but nothing is worse than not knowing what is going on when a game this great is just waiting to be consumed. It's a crying shame. ***ES***



As you battle this amazing creature, the classical accompaniment, well, it's hard to describe. Let's just say you need to go here.

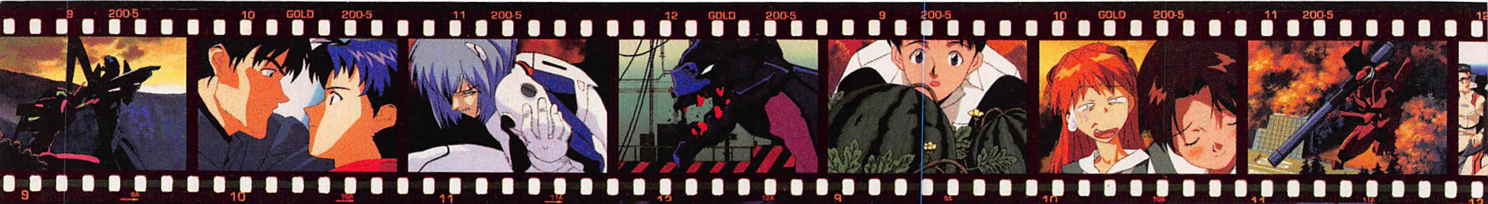



Silhouette's bosses are so epic and complex that you'll spend as much time figuring out how to defeat them as you will defeating them. The two-toned aspect together with the graphics and sound provide a truly unique experience.





Don't wait too long SOA, we could really use a little Treasure...



AnimeFan



Before we get to the reviews, I'd like to explain a few things. First, we've recently been criticized for our constant, full-page coverage of *Evangelion*. Look, it's this simple: There has never been a better anime series than *Evangelion*, which makes it without question the best title in each edition of AnimeFan. If something is unquestionably the best, why replace it with something lesser just for the sake of replacing it? The big Japanese anime magazines often featured *Eva* on their covers for months in a row, simply because it was the best, as it is now, here in America. I hope that explains it for you. Second, we *are* getting a bit ahead in our coverage. *Eva 0:10* may be the last set of episodes released for a while, as episodes beyond this haven't even been released on tape in Japan yet, due to Gainax wanting to re-do some of their footage. So don't worry; we'll only be a month ahead when we do *Eva 0:10* next month. Thanks for reading, now on to the review.







By the way, we never got around to reviewing the dub of *Eva 0:7*, but there's really no reason to—it's stayed the same, generally decent quality, but somewhat maimed as usual with Asuka's lame Germanisms and what-not. But, fellow Anime fan, I know *you* don't buy dubs, do you? 'Course not.

Eva 0:9 contains episodes 17 and 18, *The Fourth Child* and *The Judgment of Life/Ambivalence*, which are also considered to be some of the best in the series. The thoroughly shocking, brutal, and emotionally draining Episode 18 is also my personal favorite in the series.

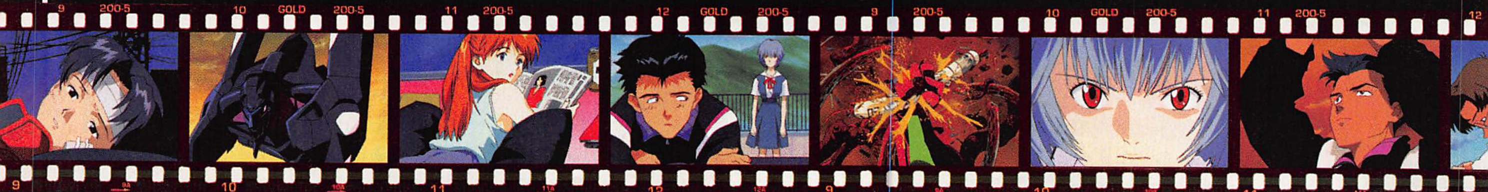
In this volume we learn of the existence of production model Evangelions Unit-03 and -04. EVA-04, it seems, was destroyed along with NERV Branch 2 in a freak accident related to the testing of a mysterious new experimental "S2" engine. Unit-03, however, is still intact, and is being shipped to Japan for testing. Shinji wonders who the pilot is, and it seems everyone around him knows but won't tell him. The day of the test arrives, but something goes terribly wrong: Somehow, a new, orange-patterned Angel (the 13th) invades the system of the jet-black Eva-03. After the Angel makes short work of Rei and Asuka, will Shinji be able to overcome his conscience and attack the berserk Eva, which still has a 14-year-old pilot inside it, perhaps one he even knows? Nick Rox

AF Review

	F D C B A	
animation		A++
n/a		
story		
music		

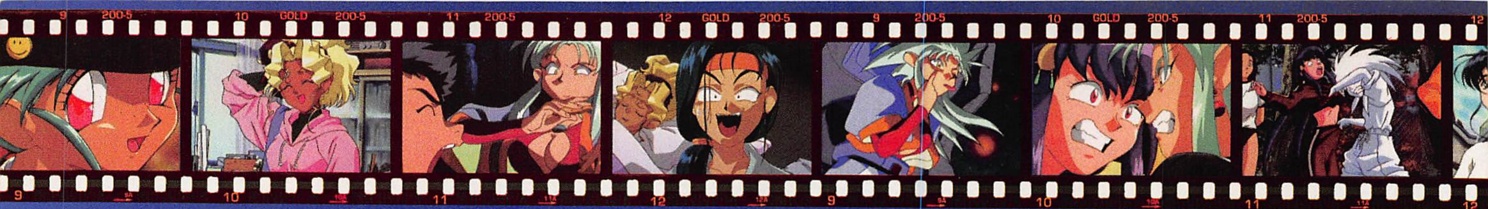
NEON GENESIS EVANGELION
Genesis 0:9





*Nick Rox's Important Note: This isn't the real *Eva 0:9* cover, because A.D. Vision hadn't made it yet when we went to press. I bet you were fooled, though! Doesn't it look real?! You better believe it! The real one will look somewhat similar to this, as the same art of Tohji will be on the cover.


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TENCHI MUYO! IN LOVE DVD



I have about a thousand things to say about *Tenchi Muyo in Love!*, the movie based upon the mega-popular Anime series, and I have just as many things to say about the DVD release of it. Unfortunately, I have a very small space to work with, so I'll just have to do the best that I can.

Based on the first *Tenchi* TV series, the movie opens with the escape of Kain, one of the most powerful and feared criminals in the Galaxy. Kain holds a deep hatred for the house of Jurai, and seeks to destroy any with its bloodline... especially Achika, Tenchi's mother. At about the same time, Tenchi begins to disappear, being saved just in the nick of time by the scientist Washu. She explains that something has happened to Tenchi's mother in the past, and if it isn't corrected soon, Tenchi will cease to exist. So, Tenchi and his friends are sent back to 1970, where they must protect Achika and defeat the evil Kain.

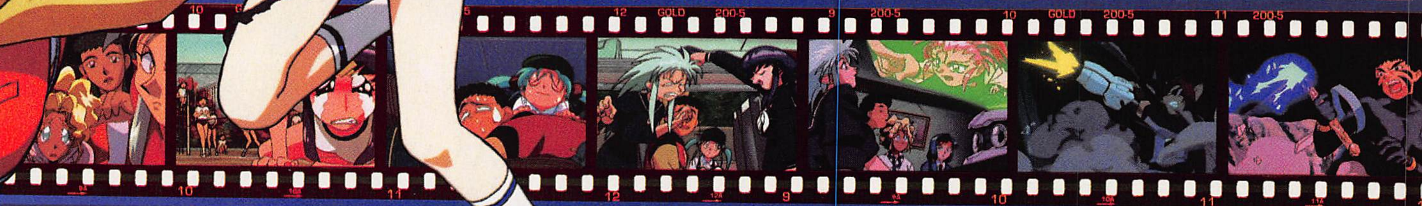


Tenchi Muyo in Love! is one of the best examples of Japanese animation that I can think of. Every area of it is of the utmost quality, from the animation, the English and Japanese voices, the music, the story, the characters, all wrapped up in a THX-approved package. So how is the DVD version? In a word, breathtaking. Going on the fact that the LaserDisc version was the best version, up to this point, the DVD release completely blows it away. The color is far richer than you've seen, the picture quality is amazing, and the sound is top-notch. As well, it's loaded with extras, including English and Japanese vocal tracks and subtitles, interviews, lyrics, product information, four separate movie trailers, a fully animated menu, and more. Shidoshi

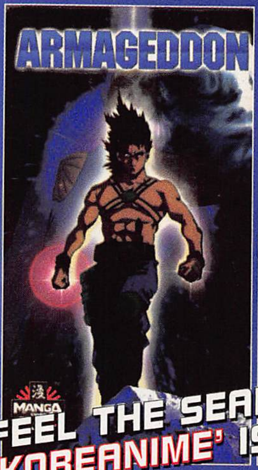
AF Review

animation / dubbing / story / music — F D C B A — **A+**





ARMAGEDDON



Did you know that most anime is actually produced in Korea? That's right: The vast majority of anime ink-and-paint is NOT done in the country of its origin. Koreans do a hefty amount of production on American Saturday morning cartoons, too. I bet you're wondering "Wow! Those Koreans sure can animate. Wonder what they'd do if left to their own devices?" Hmm. Actually, you probably weren't wondering that, but what you see here is the answer... *Armageddon*—fully created by Koreans, for Koreans. Taken at face value, Armageddon is one of the worst anime ever produced. Dig deeper, however, and the true value emerges: Pure and utter kitsch. Film has long had unutterably bad, z-grade, MST3K-fodder productions which succeed for reasons their creators never intended—they're just laughably terrible. I don't think there's yet been an anime that fit into that category, but *Armageddon* certainly does.



Violently bad character design, music, direction, hokey CG done with models that obviously came with the rendering program, and a complete and utterly unfathomable storyline add up to non-stop mania. Throughout the course of this choice treat you'll be gaping at the screen in total shock, exclaiming "How can this *BE?!*" as things generally happen at random and Korean love songs chime in and out.



Yes folks, this is the hot stuff. I wholeheartedly recommend *Armageddon*, but not because it's good... it's horrible. The somewhat, uh, unorthodox score on the right is due to Armageddon's ultrakitsch qualities—if rated as a "true" anime, I'd probably give it an F. - Nick Rox

AF Review

animation / dubbing / story / music — F D C B A — **!!**

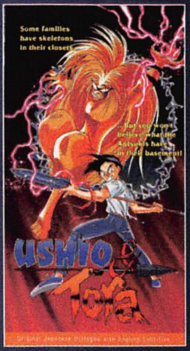






USHIO & TORA

I never really cared for *Ushio & Tora*, and I don't really care for it now. The story's good enough, revolving around a young lad named Ushio who's forced to release a demon sealed beneath his house by an ancestor 500 years ago by removing the Beast Spear that impales him. An uneasy alliance is formed: boy and demon VS. other demons, at least until they've been defeated, and Tora decides that, in fact, he wants to eat Ushio. But can he? Ushio now wields the Beast Spear, a weapon that inexplicably gives him a massive mane of hair, not to mention high-level fighting abilities. And, wouldn't you know it, more demons and other miscreants that need a good, Calvin-and-Hobbes-gone-mad-boy-'n-his-tiger beating show up in each subsequent volume. Right, fair enough. Now to what I don't like about *Ushio*... nay... what I hate: The character design. These characters are, simply put, nasty. Tora's cool, of course, but everyone else is just *ugly*, with masses of scratches for facial shading. Some may like this look, but I hate it. In the end, I suppose it is worth getting past, as *Ushio* gradually develops into a fun, somewhat comedic romp. Volumes one through three should be available as you read this; four will be out in a couple of weeks. Nick Rox





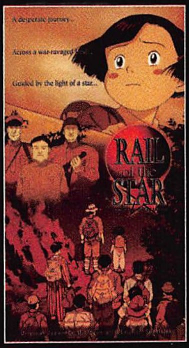
AF Review

animation / dubbing / story / music — F D C B A — **B-**

RAIL OF THE STAR

Despite being based on a true story, *Rail of the Star* practically stands up, jumps up and down, pirouettes, and screams, "I want to be a Studio Ghibli anime!!" Everything from the extremely Miyazaki-esque character and production design to the unnervingly-similar-to-*Grave of the Fireflies* plot elements attempt to conjure up those good ole Ghibli feelings.

Well, if you're going to copy someone, copy the best, I suppose. *Rail* centers around Chiko, a young Japanese girl, and her family, living in occupied Korea during World War II and the hardships they endure. That's pretty much all you need to know, I'm sure you can guess the rest—family members die, we learn lessons about how all men are, in fact, brothers, terrible things happen when WWII ends and the Japanese are forced out of Korea, but don'tcha know it, the human spirit triumphs in the end. I hope this doesn't sound like I'm belittling *Rail*, as it's actually pretty good (if very *tan*), I just get the feeling that I've been here somewhere before. Also, I was somewhat disturbed to hear Chiko's father speaking in the voice of Johnathan Ingram (from *Policenauts*; performed by Hideyuki Tanaka). Uh, but that's just me. Yeah. If you're in the mood for some decent, somewhat predictable high-drama anime, *Rail* awaits. Nick Rox





AF Review

animation / n/a / story / music — F D C B A — **C+**

TOKYO REVELATION



With the generic name and the pathetically photocopied cover art, *Tokyo Revelation* doesn't exactly jump out at you. But what would you say if I told you that *Tokyo Revelation* is actually just the US translation of the *Shin Megami Tensei* anime? Probably something like, "So what?" Fair enough. Since only one *Megami* anything game has come out in the US (*Persona*), I don't blame you for not caring.

But you should care, and I'll tell you why. Because *Megami Tensei* means one thing: public school students engaged in devil worship. Yep, high school angst and the dark arts are without a doubt the finest dramatic pairing since Tom Hanks and Rascal the Dog made silver screen magic in *Turner & Hooch*. I can't explain why it appeals to me, but mysteriously, it does. Atlus seems to be the only one who can fit those two elements together just right (witness the failure of *The Craft* as evidence that it's harder than it looks), and as a result they rake in trillions of dollars annually by releasing some 7,000 *Megami Tensei*-related games in Japan every year.

Tokyo Revelation isn't based on any one game, it's just a typical *MegaTen* storyline in which a picked-on kid figures out how to summon demons with his home PC. The demons turn on him, as they're wont to do, and attack a childhood friend with whom their summoner shares a palpable amount of homoerotic tension. Words like "magnasite" and such are bandied about, and the anime manages the impressive feat of introducing three or four new characters in each of its 44 minutes of running time.

Visually, the anime is great, full of cool character and monster designs. The storyline is good too, at least until it turns kinda weird at the end, but the whole thing is marred by really awkwardly translated dialogue. Still, *Tokyo Revelation* is definitely worth a look, especially if you're a fan of demon-summoning high schoolers, and hey, aren't we all? Takuhi

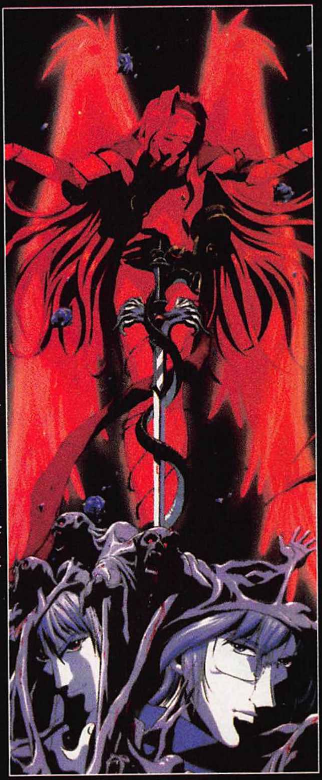




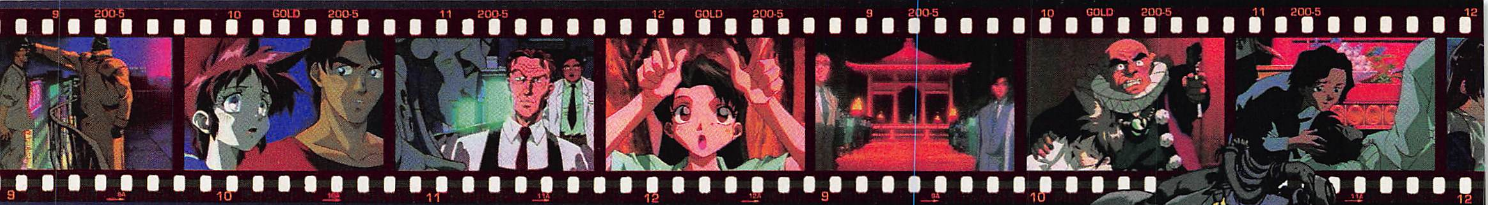


AF Review

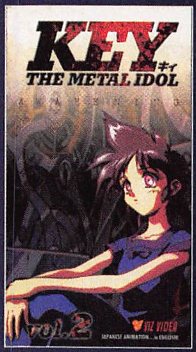
animation / dubbing / story / music — F D C B A — **B**







KEY THE METAL IDOL







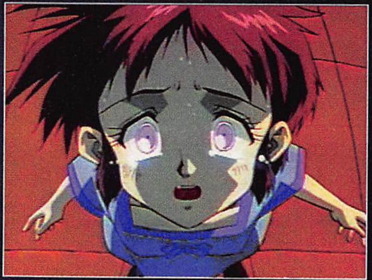
Key, the robot girl who struggles to make 30,000 friends so that she can become human, continues with her childhood friend Sakura, trying to decide how to go about her seemingly impossible task. Her life, however, is becoming increasingly difficult, as the mysterious "D" becomes more relentless in his struggle to capture her. To make things worse, one day Sakura suddenly becomes upset at Key, and kicks her out of her apartment. Luckily, Key recently befriended a strange old monk who takes her in. But will Key's bad luck put her new friend and his followers in jeopardy, and will the truth behind who she really is be more than anyone around her can handle?

With volumes 2 and 3 of *Key*, the world of this strange robot girl continues to spiral downward into an eerie, maddening fantasy. Little bits of the anime, scattered here and there, reveal that something far greater is at work, yet they yield no clue as to exactly what it is. One of the strangest parts comes when a faint transmission begins to play through computers all over Tokyo. Later, it plays again, except this time clearer, and a ghostly female voice can be heard singing in a way that sends a shiver through your body.

That's what makes *Key* work as well as it does; it's got a little bit of everything from a wide variety of anime genres. *Key* takes all of these little bits, mixes them up together, and produces a concoction that tastes better and more appealing with every bite. And yet, with everything going on, *Key* never feels aimless or without direction. The only time it really stumbles is in the English dubbing, with acting quality swinging back and forth between "not too bad" and "only passable." But hey, no matter: the more I watch *Key*, the more I want to keep watching... and I'm sure you'll feel the same way. Shidoshi

AF Review

animation / dubbing / story / music (F D C B A) — **B+**



GATCHAMAN

This anime (pronounced "aneem," of course) has special meaning for me. You see, as a child growing up in the small town of Glastonbury (southwest England, fact fans) the original *Battle of the Planets* (*Gatchaman*) series was THE ONLY ANIME that aired on network TV. England only had three channels back then and as such we had yet to be introduced to the joys of mech war and alien tentacle sex. Anyway, as a typical eight-year-old, I was totally fascinated by the wacky costumes, cool gadgets and of course the big, big, eyes that only aneem can provide. *Battle of the Planets* was THE talk of the playground and I totally dug it.



Fast forward to 1994 (well, in Japan at least) and Tatsunoko produce a new OVA (3 volumes in total) based on everyone's favorite cloaked Avian quintet, with a distinctly '90s feel—meaning June has bigger breasts and shows them. Newcomer Urban Vision is responsible for bringing *Gatchaman* across the pond and kudos to them for providing some quality dubbing. All of your favorite Science Ninjas are here, driving their trademark vehicles and kicking Galacta ass. The animation is actually pretty decent, and nostalgia aside, it's great fun in a kind of saturday-morning-cartoon kind of way. Love it or hate it, *Battle of the Planets* is back baby! Knightmare



AF Review

animation / dubbing / story / music (F D C B A) — **B**

PEACOCK KING

Continuing U.S. Manga Corps' chronicling of the anime from which the classic Genesis game *Mystic Defender* sprang from, *Part 2: Rumbling Kunlun Mountains* features much more of what made part one an excellent piece of anime.

It seems that Siegfried von Mittgard has taken control of Tomoko and is using her to gain the powers of the Regent of Darkness so he can end all good in the world and so on—it's a little clichéd, but very cool nonetheless. Much to his surprise (and pain) it turns out that Tomoko is to be the new Mistress of Darkness, thereby setting brother Kujaku against her in a climactic battle to determine the fate of the world.



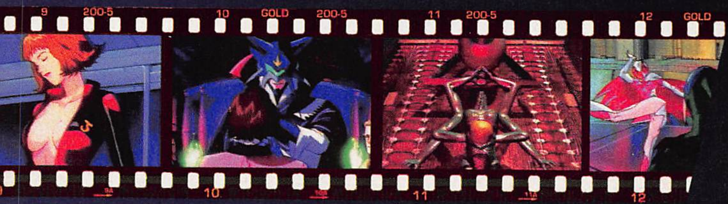
Without going too much more into the storyline, let's just say that the adventure continues the strong pace set by the first, with some pseudo-Biblical implications and various insane plot twists. The action continues at a rapid pace and the dialogue, although odd at points ("Predestination of destiny," for instance), is excellent and some decent animation rounds the package out.

If you enjoyed the first chapter, or if you're looking for something a little different and with a slightly harder edge you should do yourself a favor and check *Peacock King* out. ECM



AF Review

animation / n/a / story / music (F D C B A) — **B+**



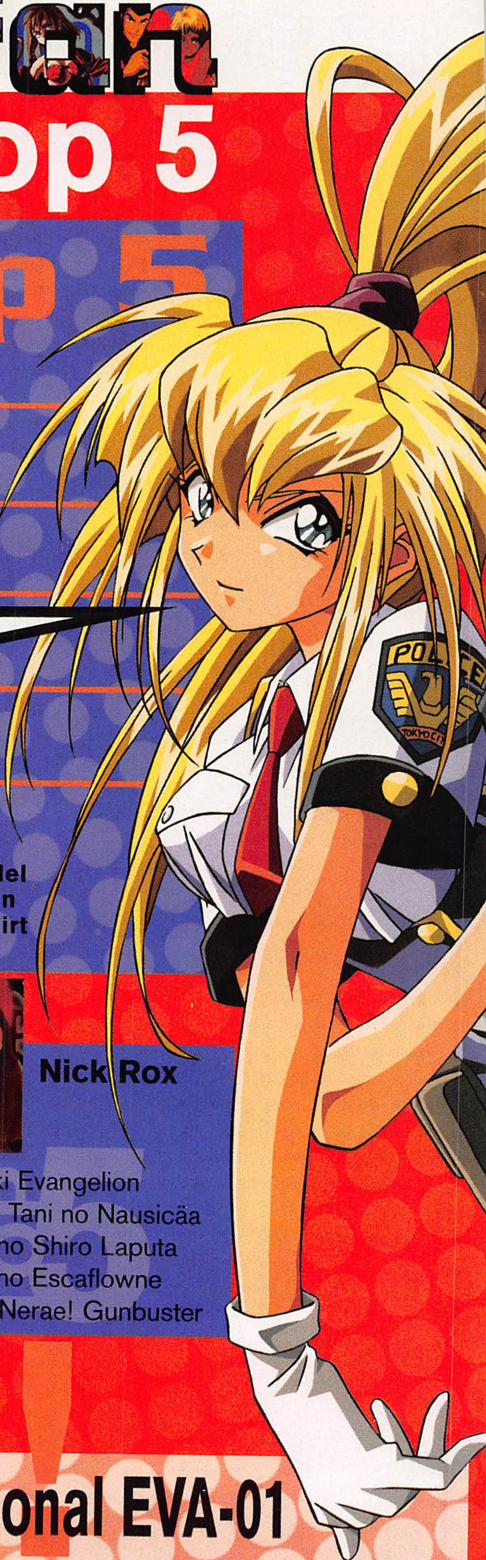



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A.D.V. FILMS AnimeFan Monthly Top 5

Reader's Top 5

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.



That's right anime fans, it's time to speak up and let us know what you're watching! List your top 5 favorite anime and send it in, attention Anime Fan! As always, we wouldn't dream of asking you to go to all the trouble of writing, mailing and stamp-licking for nothing: We'll enter you in our bi-monthly drawing (one entry per person, per month) for the 20-inch Eva model pictured below and Evangelion 1 thru 6!! Two additional prizes will be given away each month. 1st prize - a full set of Burn Up W and a Burn Up W T-shirt and 2nd prize - a full set of Devil Hunter Yohko courtesy of AD Vision!



E Storm

1 Evangelion
2 Venus Wars
3 Peacock King
4 Saber Marionette J
5 Burn Up W



Shidoshi

1 Tenchi Muyo!
2 Evangelion
3 Ah! My Goddess!
4 Gunbuster
5 The Hakkenden



Nick Rox

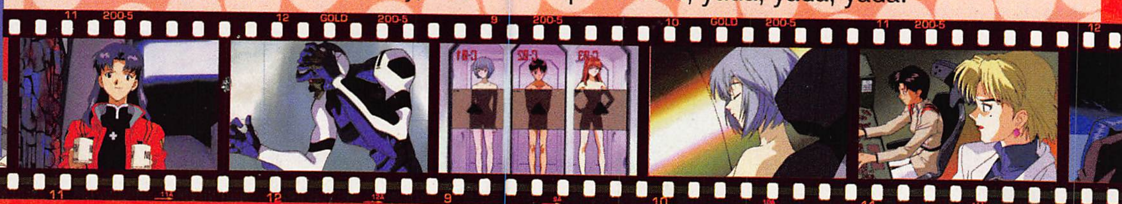
1 Shinseiki Evangelion
2 Kaze no Tani no Nausicäa
3 Tenkuu no Shiro Laputa
4 Tenkuu no Escaflowne
5 Top wo Nerae! Gunbuster

WIN!



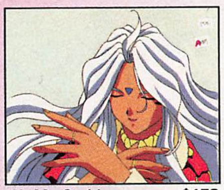
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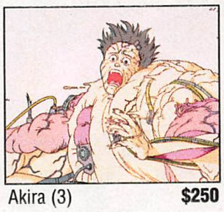

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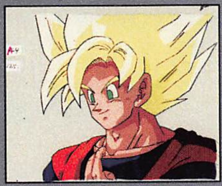

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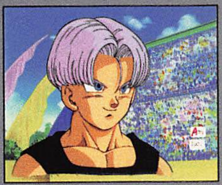

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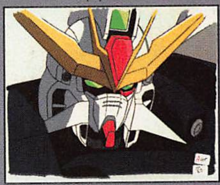

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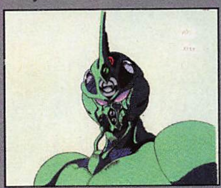

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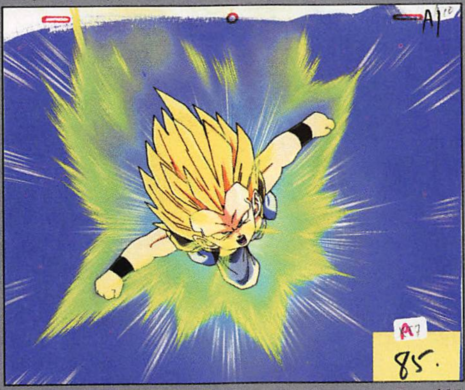

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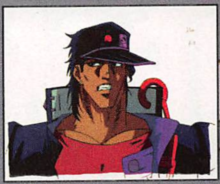

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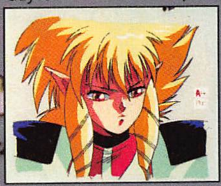

Guyver **$100**


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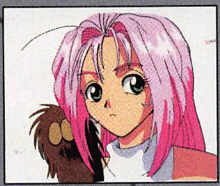

IR IA (2) ***Call***


Dragon Ball Z **$85**

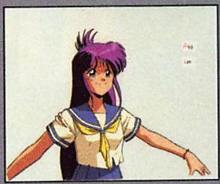

Jo Jo's Bizarre Adventure **$60**

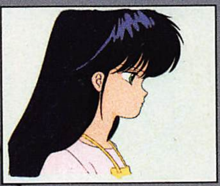

Fight! Iczer 1 **$135**

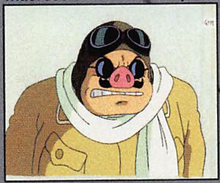

Macross **$400**


Macross 7 **$125**

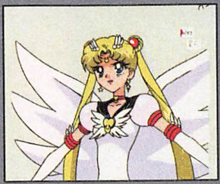

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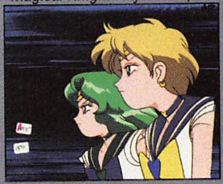

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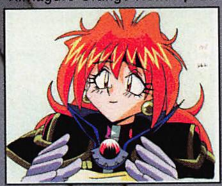

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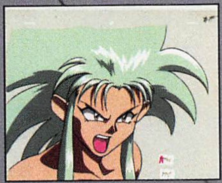

Sailor Moon **$85**

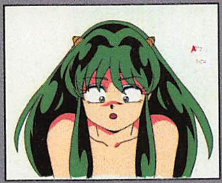

Sailor Moon (2) **$150**


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Astro Boy
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Princess Knight
Mighty Orbots
Speed Racer
Galaxy Express 999
Captain Harlock

O.A.V., T.V. & Movie

Akira
Angel Cop
Armitage III
Ah! My Goddess!
Appleseed
Battle Royal High School
Black Magic M-66
Bubblegum Crisis
Bubblegum Crash
Blue Seed
Bastard
City Hunter
Cleopatra D.C.
Cobra
Cyber City Oedo 808
Cyguard
Cutey Honey (TV)
New Cutey Honey
Dangaioh
DNA
Dirty Pair
Dirty Pair Flash
Dragonball Z
Detonator Orgun
El-Hazard
Fatal Fury
Fist of Fury
Gall Force Eternal Story
Gall Force Earth Chapter
Ghost in the Shell
Rhea Gall Force
Gundam 0083, F-91, MS08
Gundam Victory & Wing
Zeta Gundam
Double Zeta Gundam
Char's Counterattack
Hakkenden
Iczer / Iczerion
Iria
Kabuto
Kimagure Orange Road
Kishin Heidan
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Macross Plus (Coming Soon!!)
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Mighty Birdy
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Kiki's Delivery Service
Porco Rosso
Shonen Conan
Moldiver
Marmalade Boy
Ninja Scroll
Nuku Nuku
New Gatchaman
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OTHER STUFF

APCOM:
VING THE PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANT!
s official, *EX2* recently debuted at Japan's M Arcade show behind closed doors. The nly tidbit we know so far is that *EX2* only as 3 (new, or regular) characters at the oment and that Capcom is using a new ardware setup. No word yet on when a ome version will be available, or for which atform. Two other games that made the t at the AM show but only appeared on deo were *Star Gladiator 2* (which still runs n PS hardware) and *Street Fighter 3' 3*. he one and only thing that is known about *F 3'3* is that Chun Li is a playable charac-r. *Star Gladiator 2* is already being con-erted to the PS and should be out in the nd quarter of 1998 in Japan, and next sum-er for the US. Capcom recently released a st version of their newest 2D arcade fight-g game running on CPS2 (the second most derly arcade hardware in existence—next granddaddy Neo, of course). The name f the game is *Marvel vs. Capcom* and fea-ures 2 new Marvel characters: War achine and Venom. The Capcom charac-rs are Strider (YES!), Captain Commando, egaMan, Saotome Jin, Ryu, Chun Li, angief and Morrigan (what?! NO Ken?!). lso new to Capcom fighters is the ability to hoose a 3rd character. The catch is that e 3rd character has only one attack and ou execute the move by pushing the strong nd forward button simultaneously. The nly 3rd character currently available is rthur, from *Ghouls 'n Ghosts*. Capcom has lso confirmed that their first N64 game will e none other than *Tetris* staring Mickey ouse and Donald Duck.

K4: COMING HOME...
ere's the scoop: Williams is already work-g on both a PlayStation and Nintendo 64 ersion of the game. *MK4* is due to ship in une of '98 but will most likely be pushed ack to September or October ('Tis the sea-on, ya know). The N64 version of *MK4* will e Williams' first 128-meg game and could nd up being a 256-meg game depending on ow lean they can get the final code to run. 's also scheduled to hit PlayStation around he same time. Speaking of the arcade ame, *MK4*'s 2.0 upgrade will hit arcades oon, with Ed Boon burning the ROM as we peak. The upgrade features 3 new charac-ers: Jax, Noob Saibot, and Johnny Cage. he story has been tightened up and there re 5 new ways to use the weapons ("Hey ohnny, spray some more blood over ere."). Oh, and each character has one ew weapon. The characters outfits can ow be damaged (hmmm, the possibili-ties...) and some characters have new moves. Plus, 2.0 has new fatalities and new outfits. Williams has also told us that every Bally Midway arcade game for the next couple of years will be released for the N64—that's a big shock from the house of *War Gods*. That means *Bio Freaks* (lookin' good), *Cruis'n the World*, and every other game in development will come out for the N64 sometime down the line...

UP THE TREE... HOUSE.
The name for *Mario Paint 64* has been changed to *Mario Artist* (ugh, but at least it's tentative). *Zelda 64* will not make it this year in Japan and will be pushed back to January or February (you can thank 128 extra megabits for that—not that I'm complaining). The name will also change (hooray!) and the game will sell for under $75 in Japan. In the US the game will retail for $69.95 (not bad for 256 megs). And get this, we even get a gold cart like the original on NES—very cool, Nintendo. As mentioned previously in Other Stuff, *F-Zero 64* already has a sequel in the works at NCL (Nintendo of Japan). The new version, titled *F-Zero DD* (wonder what system it's for...), will have 10 to 20 new tracks and a course edit feature. By the way, *Yoshi's Story* was given a official release date for Japan. The date is December 12, 1997, priced at only $55, and the US version will come out February 8, 1998. But the biggest and most shocking news is word of the next Nintendo system (they don't waste any time), and the ol' gossip guru from a publication to be named later has it ALL wrong—here's the real deal: The next machine from Nintendo will be released in the year 2001, and yes, the hardware is being produced by Silicon Graphics. The CPU in the hardware is based on a new 128-bit chip designed by MIPS, and it has RAM, graphics, video and sound processors all on the same chip. The CPU is the equivalent of 500 64-bit RISC processors and will run at an amazing 350 to 400 Mhz (here we go again). This Mhz quote is going by what the chip is currently running at and could end up being even faster, but no guarantees as this is VERY early. The biggest surprise is that the new system (N128?) is a cartridge-based machine and not CD like many would have hoped for (No, not again...when will they learn?! Oh the humanity...).

BONK 64 ANYONE?
Hopefully you're sitting down for this one, cause it's a doozy... Rumor has it that the Sega/NEC Dural partnership has taken on a whole new meaning. This is entirely unconfirmed (although it comes from one of our crack GF commandos behind enemy lines), but it seems that NEC may step in and assume command of the new console. This means that the Dural becomes NEC's much desired re-entry into the console elite (after the dismal showing of the PC-FX). So if Dural becomes NEC's project, where does that leave Sega? Well, apparently Sega may finally be going the software-only route. There is this persistent little rumor that Sega may go after a PS license! This means you could possibly see your favorite Sega titles on PS (*VF3*, anyone?). Furthermore, freeing themselves from the cutthroat hardware market would enable Sega to produce titles on ANY format (N64, anyone?). We'll keep you posted on this rumor that even I don't believe!!

GF EDITOR TAKES CONTROL IN SATURN DUKE NUKEM 3D!
Early in *Duke 3D*'s development, Knightmare recommended to Lobotomy an alternative control scheme that used the Sega analog pad in a similar fashion to *Turok* on N64. And guess what? They included it in the final version! But only as a code. Whilst playing the game, pause, then enter this code: YYZ-ZXXYXZ. A message should appear saying 'Jevons Control: On'. You can now use the analog pad to free look and the Y, Z, B and C buttons to move. A is activate, X is use item, the L shoulder button is shoot, the R shoulder button is jump, and the d-pad selects both weapons and items. With practice this control scheme allows for much more fluid control than the regular setup and is especially good for NetLink deathmatch! Groovy!

RESIDENT EVIL 2 DEMO GAMESHARK CODES
Want some new weapons and keys not available in the demo? You got it. You can even access new rooms!

800A4BF0 FFxx

Replace xx with the following:

04 - Custom Handgun
06 - Custom Magnum
0F - Sub Machine Gun
08 - Custom Shotgun
40 - 'C' Key
41 - 'S' Key
42 - 'D' Key
3F - Another Key

AND FINALLY....
THE SILHOUETTE MIRAGE DEBUG MODE
At the Treasure logo screen press and hold X, B, Z and Start for an instant debug menu. Easy peasy.



Posty,

Hi! Yes, it's me again (now is that a good or bad thing? Heh heh...) Got another couple of issues itching my brain again... and I mean itching!! So again, I've come in search of answers from the current paragon of gaming truth!

1. What's up with this RAM cart biz!?! They MUST bring the RAM cart out here in the States! Otherwise how will all us loyal Capcom freaks get all that glorious frame-per-perfect-frame, arcade exact animation we crave on our Saturn? And if Sega doesn't release its 4-meg jobby, will Capcom? And if the worst comes to the worst, and no RAM cart comes out here, will American games be compatible with a Japanese RAM cart?

2. Terry? Where are you?!!! What's happened to him? I miss him and all his gorgeous airbrush works! Is he gone for good, or will he be back? I started to notice a couple of issues ago that his presence seemed to be missing, then the appearance of Graffiti Wall (as opposed to Wolfinger's Wall) in the May issue kinda sealed my suspicions. Wherefore art thou, Terry?

3. Speaking of the Wall, will GF be bringing back its fan art section (*on my knees begging for a big "Yes"!!*) Please please please?!!? I miss that section so much! I always look forward to seeing what kinda fan art pops up in there (some Guile pics, perhaps?)!

4. Think you have any info on this Capcom Nation thing? One of my pals was lucky enough to go to the E3 and was nice enough to bring back a copy of it for me, and I'm really looking forward to the real thing! It seems GameFan is also lending quite a hand in the process.

5. And lastly, just one more thing: Capcom, BRING GUILE BACK!!!! PLEASE!!! I'll wash your floors, paint your roof, water your plants, dust your monitors, save your chickens...!!! I miss him....*sniffle* (and to tell you the truth, and totally no offense to any of you, but I'm sick beyond belief of Ryu, Ken, Chun Li and Sakura! Those guys are always around, whereas I never get to see my beloved blonde boy anymore!... No justice, I tell you!) Again I hope I didn't offend you too much! Just had to get that off my chest... *ouch*

Well once again, thanks for listening to me chatter! (Hopefully you're not sick of me yet?) As usual, keep on making the best darn mag there is!!! Oh yeah, and thanks for the info on the waffle chip thing! Sadly we don't have such products over here in the Northeast...

Jen Seng
Westborough, Ma

Sick of you? Jen, how could you say such a thing?! Why, it's been so long since your last letter that I've practically been suffering from 'Jen' withdrawal symptoms!

1. The official line is that the 1 meg RAM WILL NOT come out here. However you can use the Japanese RAM cart with the US version of MSH, so it's not all bad news. As for the 4 meg cart, who knows? Seeing as all the new Capcom games won't run without it, if Sega wants to bring them over here, they have no choice but to release the cart. Of course, this is SOA we're talking about, so nothing's possible...

2. & 3. I now hand this letter to Mr. Terry Wolfinger... Thanx, Posty. Hi, Jen!!! Yes, I'm back! I've been back for about two months now and am drawing and painting furiously. You should start to see new art flooding these pages already. You asked and now you shall receive! The Infamous Wall is back (as seen last ish.). We had to skip it this month but it should be a regular feature very soon. So, keep the awesome Guile pics comin' in. Back to you, Posty...

4. Thank you, Mr. T... Capcom Nation was a little catalog given away by Capcom at E3. It's a cool piece of Capcom memorabilia so hold on to it.

5. Your love for Guile knows no bounds.

Dear Postmeister,

September GameFan was a mixed bag. *Final Fantasy VII* wasn't on the cover because...? Of all the magazines, I expected GameFan to do a good *FFVII* cover. Oh well, it had the best looking and best written review of the game of any 'zine thanks to Nick Rox. I couldn't agree with his statements more. It is the best game ever made. Now if only his *Street Fighter EX* review had been as on the money. I want to know who this Pod-Nick is and what he's done with the real Nick Rox. I'd have thought that, of all of the editors of all the magazines, Nick Rox would realize what a horrible obscenity *EX* is. Not a few issues ago he was praising the fact that *SF3* is 2D and condemning Capcom for making *EX*, now he's talking about how great it is! Not only is it the worst *Street Fighter* since the live action movie game, it isn't even really *Street Fighter*! One of the local import selling stores had a copy opened to play, and I saw the abomination that is this game. Let's examine the charges against *EX*, shall we?

1. It wasn't made by Capcom. Its second greatest crime.

2. It's 3D. The greatest crime I can think of to do to a *Street Fighter* game. One of the hallmarks of Capcom's fighters has always been their amazing animation. The character animation in *EX* is choppy and lifeless even for a 3D fighter. Oh, but wait! This isn't a Capcom game, is it? Not to mention that the characters are Tekken 1 blocky.

3. One word: Skullomania. 'Nuff said.

4. By Nick Rox's own admission, the timing is floaty. TIMING IS EVERYTHING IN *STREET FIGHTER*!!!! Why not add a block button and a run button while you're at it?

5. Even the hand drawn character art is below Capcom's standard of quality. The USA cartoon series looks better. Think about it guys, the picture of Sakura on the cover looks like a guy dressed as Sakura.

6. Chun-Li and Sakura deserve better. They deserve to not look like they're made of Lego. When I saw Chun-Li's 'Happy Dance' win pose, instead of being cute, it made me shudder with revulsion.

7. The whole point of making a 3D fighter is to have different gameplay aspects like side-stepping or grappling. *EX*'s greatest offense is that it's 3D for the sake of being 3D.

"But Patrick," EX lovers might say, "it has a master training mode! And instant replays! And Guile!" No, it has a hideous mockery of Guile that looks nothing like him. You'll pardon me if I don't bow in reverence to this piece of s**t posing as *Street Fighter*. Mere words cannot describe my utter HATRED for this game. Just thinking about the fact that the game exists hurts my soul, and the scars may never heal.

I trusted you Nick. I thought you understood. I've tore the pages containing any trace of *EX* out of my copy of this issue and will do so to all future issues containing anything on that game (unless they're in a negative context). And no, I'm not still Mr. Anti-3D. I own a copy of *Tobal 2*, and love it. But *Street Fighter*... *Street Fighter* should not be 3D.

Good-bye from a betrayed-feeling,
hurt and angry reader,
Patrick Little,
Elizabethon, TN

PS. Skullomania is the stupidest character in fighting game history. Kabuki Joe isn't that stupid.

PSS.. *EX* sucks the big one. *Toshinden U.R.A.* is a better fighting game.

Calm down Patrick! Breathe deeply. Here, let me get that foam from the corner of your mouth. Must be tough wearing that straight-jacket all the time... But seriously, SFEX is a harmless, entertaining little beat-'em-up. No it's not 'proper' Street Fighter *but the combos are fun and it is definitely not a worse game than* Toshinden U.R.A. *And you think Kabuki Joe 'isn't that stupid'?!? "Guard, help! I think his straps are loosening!!"*

Dear Posty,

I have been an avid gamer since the days of *Pac-Man*. Being in my early twenties, I still remember having guests over & breaking out with an original *Pong* machine. So I've been around for the ups & downs of the video game industry. I've always had a Sega from the get go. From the SMS to the Saturn. So what's up with Sega's future? I don't want to see an industry without Sega, and I know others feel the same way!

1. Any hopes of seeing *Street Fighter EX* for the 64? The game rocks! I've played all the *Street Fighter* incarnations and in my opinion *SFEX* is a better game than *SF3*. Don't get me wrong, I've given *SF3* a chance. But when I first saw it, It was like Capcom took a step backwards graphically. Heck, *Alpha 2* looked and played better than *SF3*. Most of my friends agree with me on this issue.

2. *Resident Evil 64*? Hey, I just played the demo of *Resident Evil 2* on the PS and it impressed the heck out of me! I thought, "Wow, if it's this good on PS, imagine it on N64." Yeah, I know it's a CD and holds more memory, but the DD64's coming out, right?

3. *Tomb Raider 64*?

4. When the so called Black Belt comes out will it be compatible with the Saturn's library of games?

5. When's the Saturn *Resident Evil Dash* coming out?

6. What's this so called deal between Capcom and Sega I'm reading about?

Well thanks for your ear, or in this case, your eyes,

M. 'Cracker Jack' H.
San Diego, CA

1. Don't let Patrick hear you say you like SFEX. He may break out of that asylum one day... As for an N64 version: no, I don't think so. Capcom's N64 development is pretty limited right now and the game didn't sell all that well for PS anyway.

2. Yoshiki Okamoto did say something about Capcom making a Ninja version of Resident Evil *for the N64 but, a) he says a lot of things and b) he's left Capcom. Oh, and FYI a CD (650mb) holds 10 times more data than the current projected spec of a DD64 disk (64mb).*

3. The short answer is no. The long answer is that Core was going to do a game "starring" Lara Croft (they couldn't call it Tomb Raider *because Sony has the exclusive rights now) but after a few months development they decided the N64 hardware was too limiting. So they stopped.*

4. Since Sega hasn't even officially announced the machine yet, who knows?

5. Resident Evil for Saturn should be in the stores now. The Dash features never made it.
6. There's no 'deal' as such. Capcom is just continuing to support the Saturn. Although it wouldn't be unreasonable to assume that Sega has given them something in return. Hmm...

Hey Postmeister,
Before I get into this letter I'd like to say how 'completely' impressed I was with the September ish. All of you did an outstanding job. The editorial was well thought out, the viewpoint crew obviously had a blast with all the quality titles, Poe was looking tasty in DNN, Japan Now was genius, etc. Point in fact: you all have put together one of THE most enjoyable issues I've ever read. Now on to the questions.
1) How many readers out there have written to Sony about getting us *Tobal 2* (US version). We need to get Sony to commit to taking the chance on both *Tobal 2* and *Zero Divide 2.*
2) To all who would attack *FFVII* - get a life!! As I'm digging deeper and deeper into this 'experience' I find myself in complete submersion & awe. While said game is running I don't have the mental capacity to think of anything except how lucky I am Square exists. Period.
3) Thank you for covering *BoFIII* and *Saga Frontier.* I've been wondering about them both. Now I eagerly await them.
4) I love 2D, but I hope PS owners aren't forced to endure anymore "less than complete" Capcom 2D fighters (*SFA2* was cool, however, I died when I found there was no Evil Ryu).
5) What info do you have on US release dates for *Front Mission Alternative* and *Spectral Tower 2*?
A. Rodriguez
Milwaukee, WI

1) Not releasing Tobal 2 *is Square's decision, not Sony's. If you're going to send letters to anyone, send 'em to Square! As for* Zero Divide 2*, there's been no announcement. Time Warner brought the first one over, so if anyone's going to release it, it's them.*
2) Right on! You tell 'em!
3) Saga Frontier *is due to be released late this year/early next year and* BoFIII *won't be out till the middle of next year. But hey, at least they're coming!*
4) After Marvel Super Heroes *I don't think PS owners are going to get ANY Capcom 2D fighters to complain about. But hey, PS* SF Alpha 2 Gold *(in the* SF Collection*) has Evil Ryu.*
5) Square is currently "considering" Front Mission Alternative *for a US release (it hasn't even come out in Japan yet) but I don't think* Spectral Tower 2 *is going to make it. Of course, I could be wrong.*

Dear Posty,
Oh RPG, Oh RPG, I must proclaim my love of thee,
Not even 'special eggs' can match, the sense of 'growing' that you hatch.
To take a lowly frightful lad, and dress his body armor clad.
To plant a shriveled heart of fear, and grow it to a soul of steel.
And enemies so once abound, now lie in graves under the ground.

Oh RPG, oh RPG, my tastes you never try to tease.
You fill me up, with spells galore, and treasure littering the floor.
You help me strong upon the ropes, with plot that rival daytime soaps.
I battled through your many foes, you saved me from my mundane woes.

Both King's Field I and King's Field II, provided splendid points of view.
Then Suikoden, and then Wild Arms, bestowed me with their many charms,
But FFVII, FFVII, the Gods have dropped you high from heaven.
Your sights are sweetness on the eye, with summon spells that mesmerize.
It's of your bliss I will remember, till Parasites befall December.

Oh my beloved 64, your virtues are what I adore.
But till the time your 'roles' appear, it's Sony that I hold so dear.
And as new prospects run to light, there's but one star amongst the night.
For GameFan will forever be, my telltale source of RPGs.
Tomas
Stoney Creek, ON

Hmm. Poignant contemporary rhetoric or side splitting comedy... You be the judge.

Write to me or I'll run for President!

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Anticipation	3	Metal Gear	2
Arkanoid Game	15	Metroid	7
Astynax	3	Mickey Mouse	5
Back to the Futr	3	Millipede	13
Bad Dudes	3	Monopoly	19
Baseball	2	Narc	4
Baseball Stars	25	NFL	2
Bases Loaded	3	Ninja Gaiden	5
Bases Loaded 2	4	Ninja Gaiden 2	5
Batman	4	Operation Wolf	2
Battletoads	7	Pac-Man	25
Black Bass	19	Paperboy	9
Blades Steel	5	Pinball	5
Blaster Master	4	Pinbot	4
Bubble Bobble	15	Platoon	2
Bugs Bny Castle	13	Play Act Ftbl	1
Capt Skyhawk	2	Popeye	5
Castlevania	7	Pro Am Racing	7
Castlevania 2	5	Pro Wrestling	5
Castlevania 3	9	Punch Out-MT	5
Commando	5	Q Bert	13
Contra	9	Rad Racer	5
Crystalis	15	Rad Racer 2	7
Dick Tracy	3	Rambo	2
Donkey Kong 3	15	RBI Baseball	2
Donkey Kong Cls	19	Rescue Rangers	7
Double Dragon	5	Robo Cop	4
Double Dragon 2	5	Rush N Attack	4
Double Dragon 3	7	Sesame St 123	5
Double Dribble	3	Sesame St ABC	9
Dr Mario	5	Silent Service	1
Dragon Warr	4	Simpsons-B vs SM	5
Duck Tales	7	Simpsons-B vs Wrld	5
Excitebike	5	Skate Or Die 1	4
Faxanadu	5	Snakes Revenge	4
Fester's Quest	2	Spy Hunter	5
Final Fantasy	15	Supr Contra	5
Friday 13th	3	Supr Dodge Ball	15
Galaga	19	Supr Mario 2	5
Gauntlet	5	Supr Mario 3	5
Gauntlet 2	5	Supr Mario/Dk Ht	1
Ghost Busters	5	Supr Off Road	9
Ghosts & Gblns	4	Tecmo Bowl	3
Golf	4	Tecmo Bowl 2	5
Goonies 2	5	Tetris	7
Gotcha	3	Tiger Heli	3
Hogan's Alley	7	Tiny Toons	13
Hoops	3	TMNT	1
Ice Hockey	4	TMNT 2	3
Ikari War	5	TMNT 3	7
Iron Sword	2	Top Gun	4
Jackal	5	Top Gun 2	4
Jaws	5	Town & Country	1
Jeopardy	13	Track & Field 2	3
John E Qback	1	Vegas Dreams	19
Jordan vs Bird	3	Wheel Fortune	9
Karate Champ	2	Wheel Fortune Fam	7
Karate Kid	3	Wheel Fortune Jr	7
Karnov	4	Wizrds & Warrs	4
Kid Icarus	19	Wrath Blk Mnta	1
Kirbys Adv	15	Wrestlemania	2
Kung Fu	4	WWF Challenge	4
Legacy of Wiz	3	Yoshi	7
Litl Nemo Dream	4	Zelda	7
Major Lg Bsbl	1	Zelda 2	7
Marble Madness	5		
Mega Man 1	25	Nintendo Deck	29

SNES

7th Saga	35	NBA Live 95	9
Aladdin	19	NBA Live 96	19
Aliens/Predator	19	NBA Live 97	49
Batman Forever	19	NBA Showdown	7
Batman Returns	19	NCAA Basketball	5
Battleclash SS	2	NHL Hockey 95	15
Beavis & Butthead	19	NHL Hockey 96	25
Big Hurt Baseball	19	NHL Stanley Cup	9
Boxing Legends	9	Paperboy 2	19
Breath of Fire	35	PGA Golf	39
Breath of Fire 2	69	Pilot Wings	15
Bubsy	25	Pitfall Harry	15
Bulls vs Blazers	4	Populous	5
Castlevania 4	15	Power Rangers	19
Chessmaster	35	Primal Rage	15
Chrono Trigger	49	Ren & Stimpy-Vdts	15
Contra 3	19	Robo Trek	19
Cool Spot	19	Samurai Shodown	13
Daffy Duck	19	Secret Of Evermore	29
Desert Strike	29	Secret Of Mana	39
Donkey Kong Cty	19	Separation Anxiety	19
Donkey Kong Cty2	35	Shadowrun	19
Donkey Kong Cty3	45	Shaq Fu	5
Doom	19	Sim City	19
Earth Bound	45	Simpsons-B Ntmr	19
Earthworm Jim	19	Spawn	19
Earthworm Jim 2	25	Star Fox	9
F Zero	13	Star Wars	19
FIFA Soccer	19	Street Ftr 2	5
Final Fantasy 2	45	Street Ftr 2-Trb	9
Final Fantasy 3	55	Stunt Race FX	19
Final Fantasy MQ	15	Sunset Riders	13
Final Fight	9	Superman/X-Men	15
Final Fight 2	19	Supr Double Dragon	19
Flashback	9	Supr Empire Strks	19
Gradius 3	7	Supr Ghouls	9
Griffey's Baseball	19	Supr Mario Allstars	19
Griffey's Winning Run	45	Spr Mario Allstr/SMW	29
Home Alone	13	Supr Mario RPG	39
Illusion of Gaia	19	Supr Mario Wrld	7
John Madden 92	2	Supr Metroid	9
John Madden 93	3	Supr Off-Road	19
John Madden 94	5	Supr Play Act Fb	3
John Madden 95	7	Supr Punch Out	19
John Madden 96	13	Supr R Type	7
John Madden 97	29	Supr Return Jedi	35
Jungle Book	19	Supr Scope (6in1)	1
Jurassic Park	25	Supr Street Ftr 2	15
Killer Instinct	13	Supr Tennis	13
Kirbys Avalanche	19	Tecmo Super Bowl	7
Lemmings	19	Tecmo Super Bowl 3	19
Lethal Enforcers	13	Tetris 2	35
Lion King	25	Tiny Toons Buster	15
Lufia	49	TMNT 4	15
Lufia 2-Rise	69	Top Gear	35
Magical Quest	15	Top Gear 2	39
Mario Is Missing	15	Toy Story	39
Mario Kart	29	Ultimate MK 3	39
Mario Paint Game	3	Uniracers	19
Maximum Carnage	13	Vegas Stakes	25
Mech Warrior	19	Wing Commander	13
Mega Man X	19	Wrestlemania	9
Mega Man X2	49	WWF Raw	19
Mickey Mania	19	WWF Royal Rumble	15
MLBPA Baseball	13	WWF Wrestlm-Arcd	19
Mortal Kombat	7	X-Men	15
Mortal Kombat 2	15	Yoshi's Island	39
Mortal Kombat 3	15	Zelda 3	19
NBA Give & Go	25	Zombies Ate Nghbr	9
NBA Jam	9		
NBA Jam-Tourn	19	Super NES Deck	39

SEGA

After Burner 2	19	NFL 95	2
Aladdin	13	NFL QB Club	2
Alien 3	9	NFL QB Club 96	4
Altered Beast	5	NHL Hockey	2
Barney's Hide Seek	25	NHL Hockey 94	3
Batman Forever	15	NHL Hockey 95	5
Batman Returns	9	NHL Hockey 96	13
Beavis & Butthead	13	NHL Hockey 97	39
Bill Walsh Ftbl	2	NHLPA 93	2
Bill Walsh Ftbl 95	2	Pat Rily Bsktbl	2
Boogerman	19	PGA Tour Golf	19
Bubsy	15	PGA Tour Golf 2	29
Bulls vs Blazers	2	Phantasy Star 3	25
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Desert Strike	19	Rocket Knight Adv	5
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Ecco The Dolphin	13	Shadowrun	13
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ESPN Baseball	7	Shinobi 3	9
Eternal Chmpns	4	Sonic 3D Blast	39
Evander Hlyfld	7	Sonic & Knuckles	15
F 22 Intercptr	9	Sonic Hdghog	5
FIFA Soccer	7	Sonic Hdghog 2	5
FIFA Soccer 95	13	Sonic Hdghog 3	19
General Chaos	19	Sonic Spinball	7
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Golden Axe 2	9	Spiderman/X-Men	13
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Joe Mntna	2	Streets Rage	9
Joe Mntna 2	2	Streets Rage 2	13
Joe Mntna 3	1	Subterrania	5
Joe Mntna 94	2	Supr Street Ftr 2	9
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John Madden 93	2	Tazmania	13
John Madden 94	2	Tecmo Super Bowl	3
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John Madden 96	5	TMNT Hyperstone	19
John Madden 97	25	TNMT Tourn Ftrs	9
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Jurassic Park	13	Toe Jam & Earl 2	19
Kid Chameleon	7	Tom Lasorda Basbl	2
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Lethal Enforcers	9	Toy Story	39
Lion King	15	Triple Play 96	19
Maximum Carnage	9	Triple Play Gold	39
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Michael Jacksn MWK	7	Vector Man	9
Monopoly	15	World Series Bsbl	7
Mortal Kombat	5	World Series 95	9
Mortal Kombat 2	9	World Series 96	29
Mortal Kombat 3	19	WWF Raw	25
Ms Pac-Man	19	WWF Royal Rumble	13
Mutant Lg Ftbl	7	WWF Sup Wrstmnia	9
NBA Action	5	WWF Wrestlm-Arcd	25
NBA Jam	5	X-Men	7
NBA Jam-Tourn	9	X-Men 2	13
NBA Live 95	7		
NBA Live 96	15	Sega Gen 1 Deck	25
NBA Live 97	39	Sega Gen 2 Deck	25
NBA Showdown	4	Nomad Unit	119

PlayStation

2Extreme	39	NFL Game Day	15
Alien Trilogy	35	NFL Game Day 97	29
Andretti Racing	39	NFL QB Club 97	15
Area 51	45	NHL FaceOff	13
Battle Arena Tsh	15	NHL Hockey 97	39
Battle Arena Tsh 2	25	PGA Tour Golf 96	35
Beyond the Beyond	39	Pwer Moves WRST	29
Contra Legacy War	35	Project Overkill	25
Crash Bandicoot	45	Rally Cross	45
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ESPN Extreme Games	35	Street Fighter-Alpha	19
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Loaded	19	Triple Play 98	48
MLB Pennant Race	25	Twisted Metal	39
Mortal K-Trilogy	39	Twisted Metal 2	49
Mortal Kombat 3	19	War Hawk	19
NBA In The Zone	15	WCW Vs World	48
NBA In The Zone 2	39	Wild Arms	45
NBA Live 96	19	Wing Commander 3	19
NBA Live 97	45	Wipeout	19
NBA Shootout	19	Wipeout XL	39
NBA Shootout 97	45	WWF Wrestlm-Arcd	19
NCAA Gamebreakers	19	X-Com UFO Defense	19
Need For Speed	39		
Need For Speed 2	48	Playstation Deck	124

GameBoy

Alleyway	9	NFL	7
Baseball	12	Operation C	13
Batman	17	Pac-Man	25
Battletoads	15	Paperboy	17
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Kirbys Drmlnd	19	Tiny Toon	19
Kirbys Drmlnd2	29	TMNT 1 FFC	8
Kirbys Pinball	18	TMNT 2	15
Mega Man 1	19	Wario Blast	19
Metroid 2	13	WWF Superstars	12
Mortal Kombat	15	Yoshi	15
Mortal Kombat 2	17	Yoshi's Cookie	15
Mortal Kombat 3	24	Zelda Link	19
Motor Cross Mniac	15		
Ms Pacman	29	Game Boy	27
Nemesis	8	Game Boy Pocket	49

Saturn

Area 51	39	NHL Allstar Hockey	9
Astal	9	NHL Hockey 97	27
Bttle Arena Tsh-Remx	13	Nights	19
Black Fire	13	Panzer Dragoon	17
Bug	19	Panzer Dragoon 2	27
Bug Too!	35	Rayman	29
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D	19	Sonic 3D Blast	29
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NBA Jam-Tourn	19	WWF Wrestlmna-Arc	29
NFL 97	19	X-Men-Child Atom	39
NFL Qb Club 96	9		
NFL Qb Club 97	19	Saturn Deck	99

Game Gear

Aladdin	18	Power Rangers	9
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Batman Returns	9	Pro Baseball	3
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Donald Duck	12	Shinobi	9
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Joe Mntna	4	Sonic Triple Trouble	17
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Mortal Kombat 2	15	World Series	6
NBA Jam	15	WWF Steel Cage	15
NBA Jam-Tourn	17	X-Men	8
NFL 95	5	X-Men 2-Legacy	12
Pacman	25		
Poker Face Poker	5	Game Gear	39

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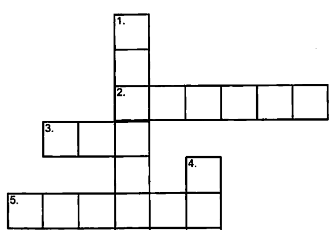
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4. Final Fantasy 7 begins in the ______ Industrial Complex.

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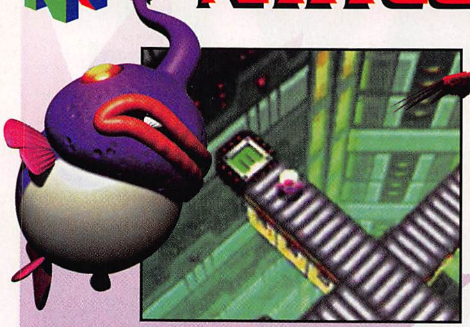
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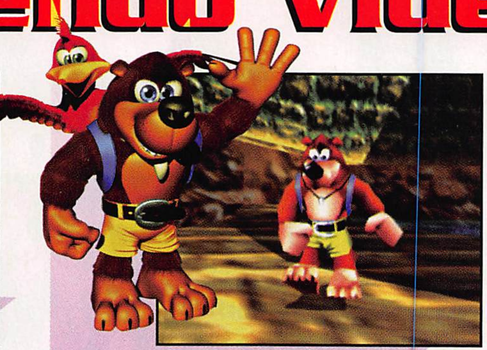

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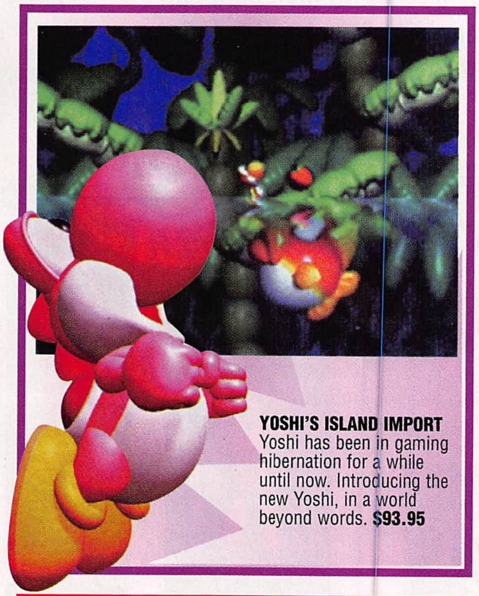
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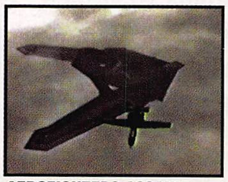
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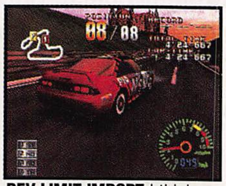
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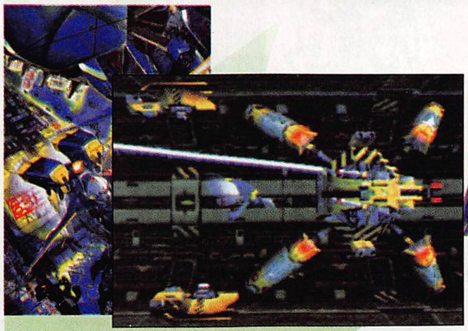
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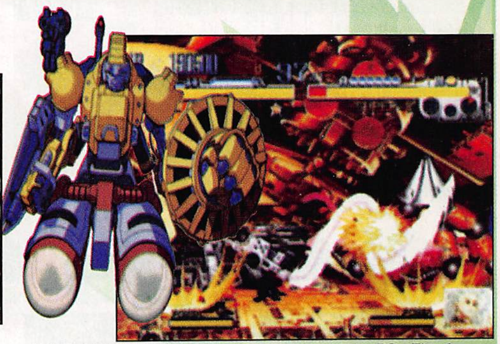
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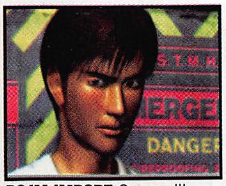
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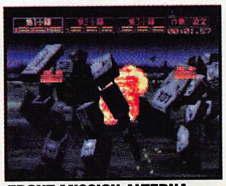
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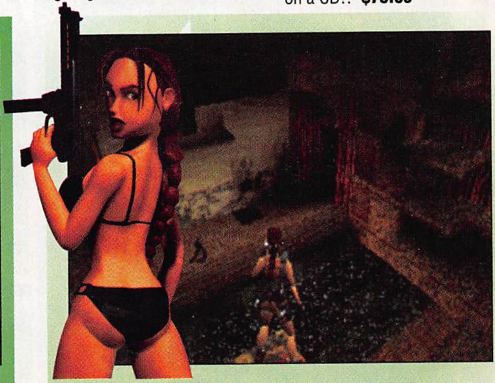
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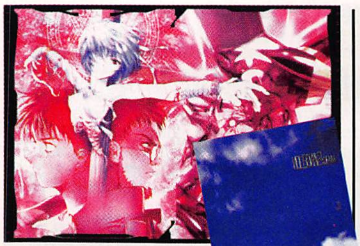

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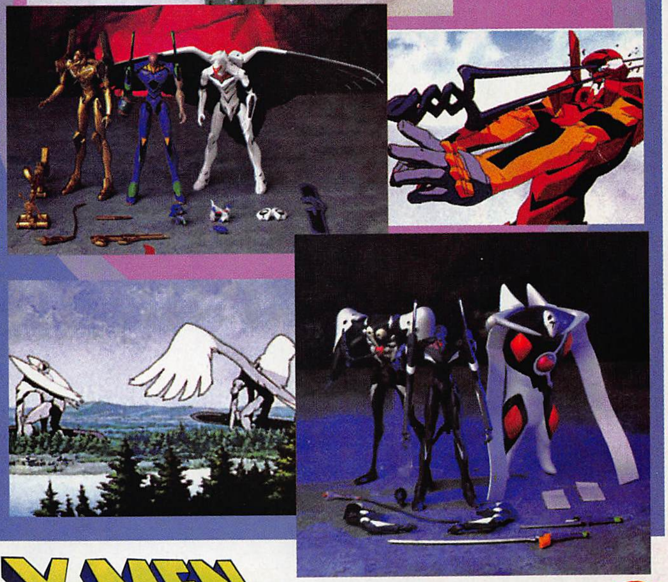


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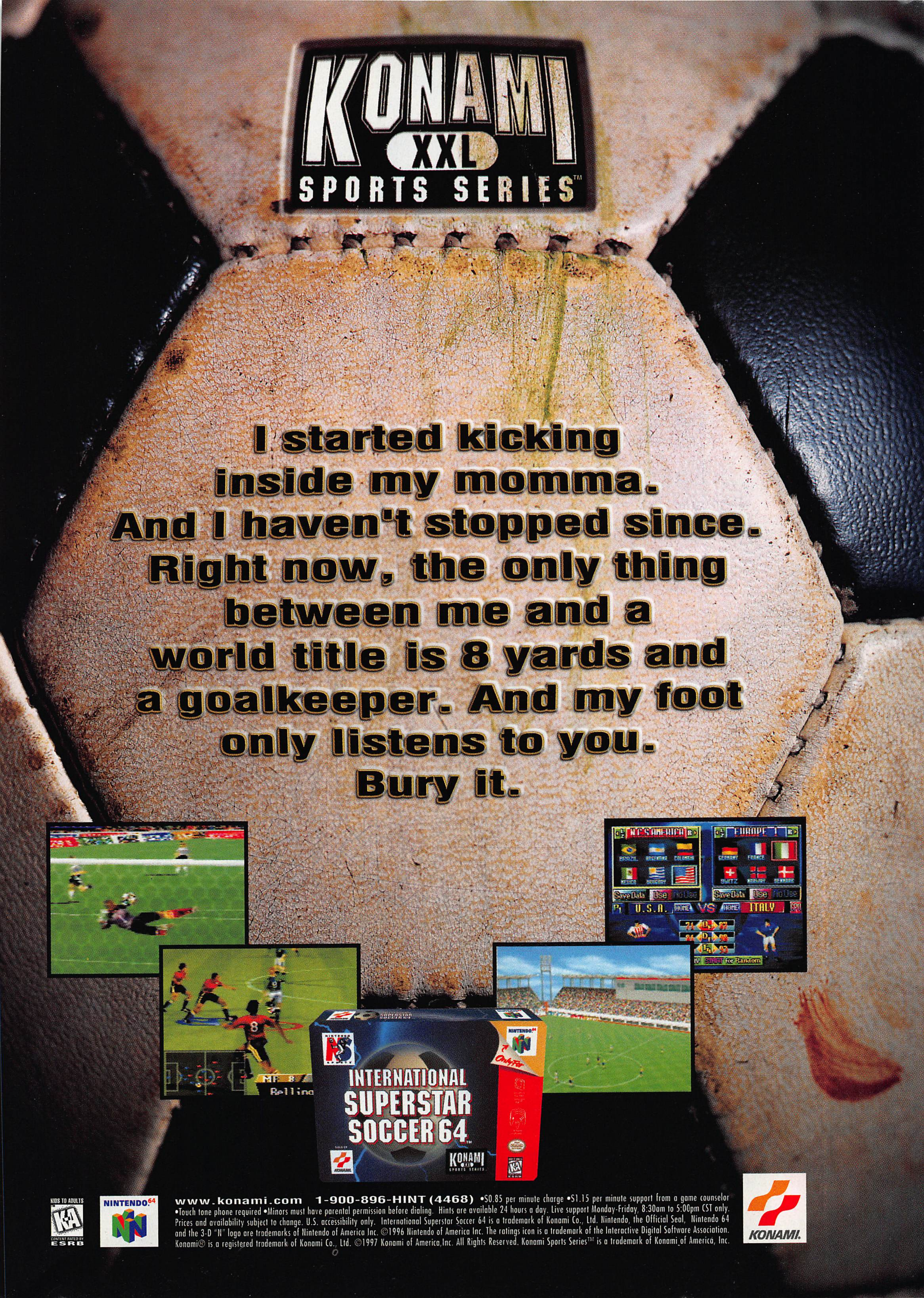
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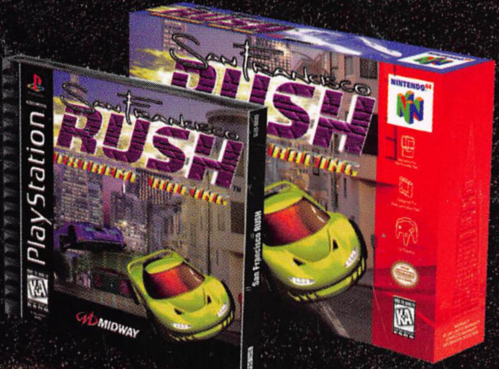

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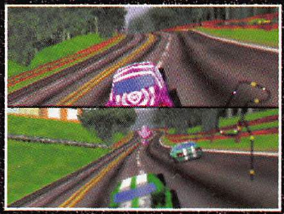

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